

TIME

PERSON OF THE YEAR

AMAZON.COM'S
JEFF BEZOS

E-COMMERCE IS
CHANGING THE WAY
THE WORLD SHOPS





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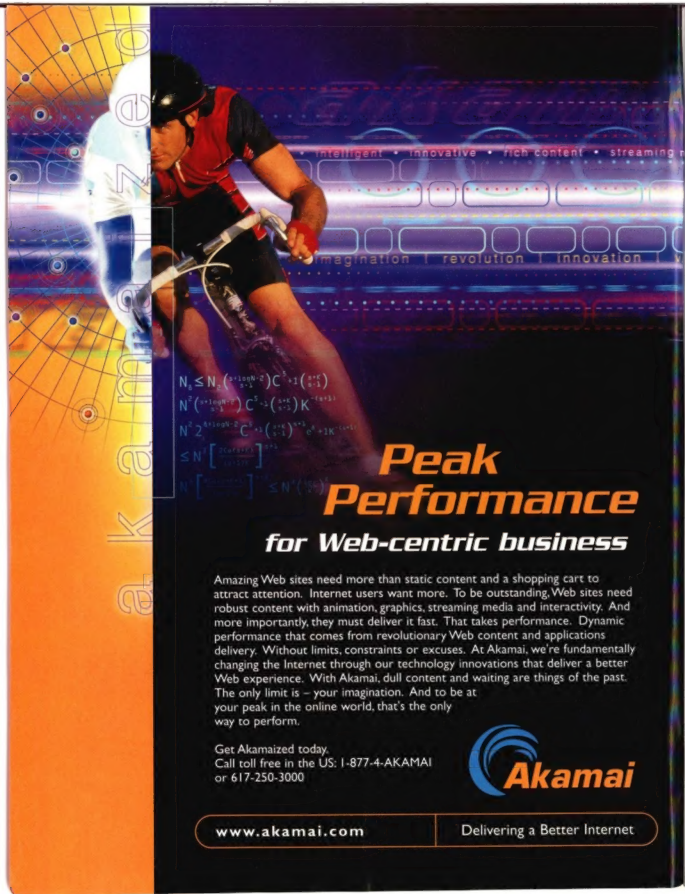
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e-Gad! Jeff Bezos knows his e-business and, at the moment, there's no business like e-business (see PERSON OF THE YEAR)

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Join **TIME.com** to talk to TIME managing editor Walter Isaacson about the *Person of the Century* on Monday, Dec. 27, at 8 p.m. E.T. on America Online (Keywords: AOL Live).

COVER: Photograph for TIME by Gregory Heisler

TIME (ISSN 0045-711X) is published weekly except for two issues combined into one at year-end and occasional special or double issues for \$67.33 per year by Time Inc. Principal Office: Time & Life Building, Rockefeller Center, New York, N.Y. 10020-1393. Don Logan, Chairman, CEO; Richard Alderson, Treasurer; Robert E. McCarthy, Secretary. Periodicals postage paid at New York, New York, and at additional mailing offices. © 1999 Time Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. TIME and the Red Border Design are protected through trademark registration in the United States and in the foreign countries where TIME magazine circulates. Subscribers: If the postal service alerts us that your magazine is undeliverable, we have no further obligation unless we receive a corrected address within two years. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to TIME, P.O. Box 50951, Tampa, Florida 33650-0951. For subscription queries, call Customer Service at 1-800-843-TIME between 7 a.m. and midnight EST, Monday through Friday; 8:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. EST, Saturday. For expedited service, call between the hours of 2:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., Tuesday through Thursday. Mailing List: We make a portion of our mailing list available to reputable firms. If you would prefer that we not include your name, please call or write us at P.O. Box 60001, Tampa, Florida 33630, or send us an e-mail at privacy@time.com.

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Country.

That Man in the Cardboard Box

WHEN JEFF BEZOS CAME TO LUNCH at TIME last month, the second most noticeable thing about him was his laugh, a loud rat-a-tat-tat that startled some of us at first and then became infectious. The most noticeable thing about Bezos, however, was his intelligent passion. He fervently believes that he and Amazon.com will change shopping forever and that it is only a matter of time before you buy just about everything you need, from toothpaste to Tiffany lamps, on the Web.

We don't know how right Bezos is, but as the driving force behind the striking growth in Internet commerce over the past 12 months, he has helped guarantee that the world of buying and selling will never be the same.

Joshua Quittner, who wrote the profile of our 1999 Person of the Year, spent three weeks trailing Bezos. "He's manic without the depression," says Quittner, who writes our Personal Time technology column and edits TIME DIGITAL.

Quittner and photographer David Burnett even stayed at Bezos' Seattle, Wash., home overnight, where they played way too much Foosball. (How good is Bezos? Let's just say that as a Foosball player, Bezos is a great Internet strategist.)

"The man is on a mission," observes Quittner. "This is not about money. He lives quite modestly, considering he's worth \$10 billion. He genuinely believes that come what may, he's going to change the fundamental equation between buyer and seller, putting more power in the consumer's hands."

And along the way, more money in

the pockets of Amazon employees. Michael Krantz, our San Francisco bureau chief, hung around their offices in Seattle for a few days and noticed how the subject of stock options never came up. "They're all imbued with this giddy faith that their best days lie ahead of them," says Krantz. "The subtext, of course, which they are well trained never to mention to reporters, is that if they're right, a lot of them are going to be extremely rich."

No examination of e-commerce

to own the future. Chris Taylor examines the food fight among online grocery services, and Maryanne Murray Buechner wonders how Wal-Mart will fare in an e-commerce world. "The Internet clearly has been one of the most dynamic forces in the history of capitalism," says business editor Bill Saporito, who produced the package with help from senior reporter Bernard Baumohr, deputy picture editor Rick Boeth and associate art director D.W. Pine III.

We asked Margaret Carlson, who

usually writes about politicians, to order up dinner on the Web and have a party. The second half of that proposition went well; the first part makes for quite a tale. And despite a lot of coaxing to order only exotic items, Margaret wanted a safety dish and clicked for a ham. Perhaps covering politicians all these years ...

Now, about the cover image. Photographer Greg Heisler and art director Arthur Hochstein came up with the idea of shoot-



PACKING CREW: Jeff Bezos, surrounded by the team that worked on the cover

would be complete without a look at eBay, the online-auction business that is part swap meet, part town square. Senior writer Adam Cohen not only toured the company in San Jose, Calif., but also flew to Paris (ah, the sacrifices journalists make!) to have coffee with the company's elusive founder, Pierre Omidyar.

Lest our readers think shopping malls are dead, staff writer Karl Taro Greenfield looks at clicks-and-mortar companies, which are integrating actual stores with online services, and concludes that they may be best positioned

ing our Person of the Year inside an Amazon shipping box, complete with plastic-foam chips. Not only was Bezos game but his cheerfulness never flagged even after he'd spent nearly an hour in cardboard. Bezos' gleeful reaction when he saw a Polaroid shot of the image that day: "This is really weird!"

We'll take that as a compliment.

Jim Kelly

James Kelly, Deputy Managing Editor



NEXT WEEK TIME WILL PUBLISH ITS SPECIAL ISSUE ON THE PERSON OF THE CENTURY. IT WILL EXPLORE THE legacy of the person we feel has had the most lasting influence in this century, and consider others who made a difference, in both this century and the previous ones of the millennium. A discussion about who should be the Person of the Century, featuring President Bill Clinton, will air on the *Charlie Rose Show* on Monday evening, Dec. 20. There will also be a discussion each morning this week on *CBS's The Early Show*. A prime-time special on the final choice will air on *CBS* on Monday, Dec. 27. In addition, the essays TIME has published over the past two years on the 100 most influential men and women of the century are now available in a book published by Simon & Schuster called *People of the Century*.

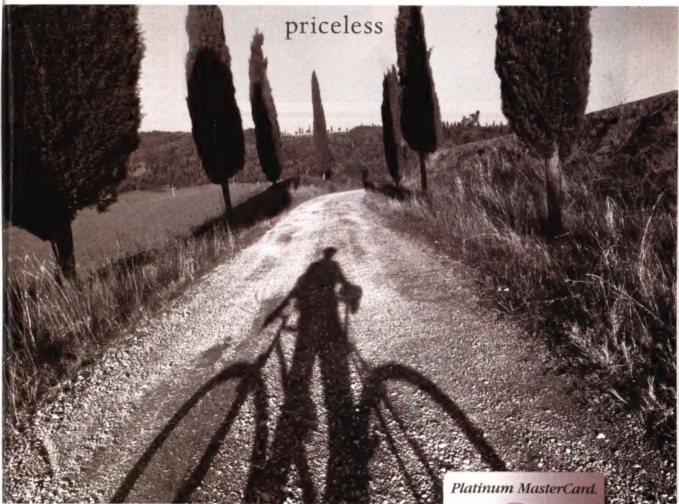
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AMERICAN SCENE

Andrew Ferguson/New York City

All Quiet on the Firing Line

William F. Buckley Jr. flicks his tongue and skewers his guests one last time

ON A BLEAK AFTERNOON last week, in a dim little TV studio in lower Manhattan, *Firing Line* finally ran out of ammunition. Hosted for 33 years by the conservative intellectual William F. Buckley Jr., the show taped its final installment, which will air on PBS stations the week of Dec. 26. Blue and white balloons had been set out to lighten the gloom, as had a panel of younger pundits, including Michael Kinsley and William Kristol. Their conversation was unhurried and intelligent, as it always is on *Firing Line*. Watching it all, you couldn't help thinking that something more than a TV show was passing away.

Print journalists who appear frequently on TV have a phrase they use after they say something silly or make a factual error. "It's just TV," they shrug, and you can understand the attitude. The conventions of the TV talk show, circa 1999, inflate the trivial and trivialize the

important. Watching *Hardball*'s Chris Matthews bark at his guests about tax plans and sex scandals, you wonder why his guests don't cover themselves with dentist's smocks to fend off the flying spitte. Kinsley recalls that as co-host of *Crossfire*, the CNN shoutfest, he once disagreed with a guest in too civil a tone. "No, no!" the producer shouted into his earpiece. "Get mad! Get mad!"

Until last week *Firing Line* was there to remind us that TV didn't have to be that way. The show was spawned in the earnest mid-'60s, before popular culture swallowed up the middlebrow and "educational TV" became a comical oxymoron. During last week's taping, Buckley told his guests about David Susskind, the talk pioneer from the 1950s who was host of a show called *Open End*. "Every night he'd go on the air with some guests at 9," Buckley said, "and he'd keep going—an hour, two hours, three—until he got bored."

A few years ago, Buckley cut *Firing Line* to half an hour

from its original hour. But he still scorned the spinning graphics, the thumping theme music, the rushed interruptions for commercial breaks. There were no commercial breaks—just two or three chairs, a couple of cameras and talk.

And of course there is Buckley himself, with his darting tongue and aristocratic drawl. The final broadcast shows clips of Johnny Carson and Robin Williams hilariously impersonating Buckley. But neither pretender could put an interviewee off balance like the *Firing Line* host, who at last week's taping leaned in to one of his guests, the liberal New York City politician Mark Green, and said, "You've been on the show close to 100 times over the years. Tell me, Mark, have you learned anything yet?"

Buckley prized intellectual combat, but also the careful ventilation of ideas. Last week he cited with pride the fact that the philosopher Mortimer Adler used *Firing Line* to explicate his elaborate

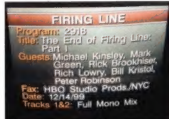
Just talk—no shouting, no music, no commercials

Buckley makes a point to one of his favorite liberals, Mark Green

proofs for the existence of God. Somehow, it's hard to imagine Adler on the *Jerry Springer Show*.

In *Firing Line*'s heyday, Hugh Hefner could discourse on the *Playboy* "philosophy" and Groucho Marx on the nature of comedy. From Jack Kerouac to Mary McCarthy, and every President from Nixon through Bush, there are few figures of intellectual significance who didn't submit to Buckley's leisurely sparring. He might open a show, as he did with Norman Mailer in 1967, like this: "I should like to begin by asking Mr. Mailer, who has been sentenced to five days in jail for a march on the Pentagon and is appealing on the grounds that he was sentenced because he is famous, to disclose whether he believes that artists should be immune from the harassments of the law." Geraldo couldn't even parse that sentence.

Firing Line was conceived in the ambition that TV could elevate its audience, and Buckley survives as a kind of monument to that goal. He will continue to write books and his popular newspaper column, in which he no doubt will stand against the coarser currents of popular culture. When the *Firing Line* taping was through last week, and after champagne had been served, Ted Koppel interviewed Buckley for *Nightline*. At the end, Koppel said, "Mr. Buckley, we have 10 seconds left. Could you sum up in 10 seconds?" Said Buckley simply: "No."



“You’ve been on the show 100 times. Have you learned anything?” —W.F. BUCKLEY JR.

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LETTERS



Jesus at 2000

“This lesson in do-it-yourself scripture writing could easily allow any of us to be a self-anointed Matthew, Mark, Luke or John.”

GEORGE A. THOMA SR.
Lombard, Ill.

REYNOLDS PRICE OFFERS A SIMPLE SOLUTION to the din of millennium madness: respond to the quiet voice of Jesus [RELIGION, Dec. 6]. Price eloquently rewrites the Gospel in words too plain to miss. His work shows that an individual's honest approach will not be turned away. This is one of TIME's most powerful pieces.

DENNIS MISNER
Grants Pass, Ore.

YOU PROMISED “A NEW GOSPEL BASED ON archaeology and the Bible,” but Price's article was simply a trite amalgam of the synoptic Gospels (*Mark, Matthew and Luke*). The historical Jesus deserves better than a narrative dressed up in cute, up-to-date literalism. No wonder the Jesus on the cover was shedding tears. Price's words reflected pious ignorance.

(THE REV.) ERNEST W. COCKRELL
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
Saratoga, Calif.

I READ PRICE'S WORK AND WAS DEEPLY moved. I wish to thank him for his uplifting, scholarly writing.

PENNY SKOGLUND
Sterling, Colo.

WHEN THE TRUTH IS NOT ENOUGH, GIVE us fiction. Jesus got liposuction in Price's article, in which the author removed the “fat” of faith and offered a new Gospel for

a new millennium. It appears that the man who as the Son of God declared “I am the Truth” has now become the son of fiction.

CHARLES CRISMIER
Richmond, Va.

PRICE'S ARTICLE ABOUT JESUS WAS FORTHRIGHT, honest and direct. As one who believes in what Jesus stands for, Price writes with the bluntness of a reporter and the honesty of a follower. I've read the Bible many times; Price's article touched me as deeply. It lifted me up.

HELEN DRAB
Pearland, Texas

WHAT PRICE FAILS TO MENTION IN HIS intellectually self-indulgent piece is the amount of evil that people would have visited on the earth without a doctrine of divine love to temper their actions. Imperialism and enslavement predate Christianity. Evil men use the handiest reason to justify their evil deeds. It is a grim tribute to the success of Christianity that so many villains, as well as holy men, have used the name of Jesus as the rationale for their acts. What was Price's motivation for “updating” the Gospels? The word of God is not first and foremost an intellectual exercise.

DAVID ADAMS
Jarrettsville, Md.

PRICE'S SILLY STORY ABOUT JESUS WAS just that, a story. What was “gospel” was Price's recounting of his inner vision and healing from cancer. But Price suffers from the modern malaise of skepticism, owing in large part to the unproved notion that the Gospels couldn't be actual history because they were composed many years after Jesus died.

VIRGINIA LEE ADI
Portola Valley, Calif.

NOVELIST PRICE OBVIOUSLY WANTS TO believe in Jesus as the true Son of God—and he experienced a strong personal clue as evidence of that belief. But Price suffers from the modern malaise of skepticism, owing in large part to the unproved notion that the Gospels couldn't be actual history because they were composed many years after Jesus died.

REMI G. DUBUQUE
Southington, Conn.

ONE OF THE WONDERFUL THINGS ABOUT Jesus' message is that it has come through 20 centuries undiminished by the stupid, disgusting commentaries of countless morons like Price.

ROBERT MCMAHON
Ocean Township, N.J.

PRICE'S ARTICLE ALSO FAILED TO GIVE ME a clear idea of how having a “personal relationship” with a man who died almost 2,000 years ago is supposed to improve my moral character or fill some metaphysical void in my psyche. I lead a very happy existence without having to seek refuge from the world in the naive sanctity of ancient myths.

ANDREW LEVINE
Succasunna, N.J.

AS A STUDENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY, THE Bible and Jesus, and as a visitor of ancient biblical sites, I found Price's piece to be insightful and intriguing. Everything he wrote was consistent with my personal studies of Jesus' cultural surroundings. Price has captured the essence of who Jesus was and what that meant to his early followers and to us today. Thank you for publishing this testament. Now if we could only get the traditional church to take this kind of look at Jesus.

NATHAN HART
Holland, Mich.

IT TAKES NO GREAT INTELLECTUAL LEAP to recognize the effects of Jesus upon human history. Faith, however, is an experience in the soul shared by Mother Teresa, Billy Graham and millions of others but not, by his own admission, Reynolds Price. It is sad that TIME would entrust such a project to one who is not able to grasp its essence, faith.

BOB DUNN
Topeka, Kans.

RELIGIOUS INSPIRATION

For all its secular Sturm und Drang, the U.S. is still a religious country, as the response to our religious coverage always proves. Our article on Jesus at 2000 is no exception. It is too soon to have a full count of the mail we've received on this piece, but the total is mounting. While we count, here are the religion covers from the past few years that have got the most mail:

■ The Search for Jesus (April 8, 1996)	1,739
■ The Bible (Dec. 18, 1995)	785
■ Miracles (April 10, 1995)	772
■ Does Heaven Exist? (March 24, 1997)	709
■ Genesis Reconsidered (Oct. 28, 1996)	600
■ Mormons, Inc. (Aug. 4, 1997)	541

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TEMPEST IN A COFFEE CUP



Many readers were intrigued by Josef Joffe's commentary stating that "bad coffee fuels expansion, machismo and the warlike passions, while good coffee wafts with civility, pacificity and abandon" (ESSAY, Dec. 6). Air Force Reserve Captain Jennifer O'Neal of Chapel Hill, N.C., is in complete agreement with Joffe. She writes, "The reason the military drinks bad coffee is to maintain that aggressive, warlike spirit! Bad Java is exactly what I need to be in my 'military mind-set'—the more mudlike the better!" Robert D. Levine

of New York City agrees, and on similar grounds: "When I was in the Israeli army in 1956, we waltzed into Sinai and Gaza. And the coffee we drank? It was called *refesh*, the Hebrew word for mud." Concludes reader André Guggenbühl of Zurich: "Can you imagine how peaceful the world would be if only good coffee were permitted?" Emphasizing Joffe's point that aggression and willpower melt away when a nation drinks good coffee, Guggenbühl contends, "As Joffe tells us, Americans are now drinking 'gourmet blends.' No question that the 21st won't be an American Century."

Crackdown in Schools

JOHN CLOUD'S ARTICLE ON THE AFTER-effects of the Columbine shooting and the prevalence of "zero-tolerance" policies for campus violence was one-sided (NATION, Dec. 6). Cloud makes it seem as though schools are suspending kids left and right for minor infractions, like having blue-dyed hair. I am an 18-year-old

student in my last semester of high school, and I'm not alone in thinking that getting tough with kids and having a zero-tolerance rule for weapons and violent behavior are absolutely right. Maybe the youngsters who were singled out had prior records of trouble at school. Booting students out of school and jailing them for a couple days doesn't solve anything in the long run. What about thera-

py and counseling for those who are teased and abused? Maybe someday we'll find a happy medium between abandonment and letting kids have free rein to do as they please.

AVIVA WEST
Windsor, Ont.

Lessons from Revolutions

RE PAUL GRAY'S REVIEW OF HISTORIAN Susan Dunn's *Sister Revolutions: French Lightning, American Light* (Books, Dec. 6): as a Frenchman living in the U.S., I have had the opportunity to reflect on the respective merits and shortcomings of the two countries' revolutions. Dunn does not render sufficient justice to the particular challenges of the French Revolution. While the Reign of Terror was a sad phase in French history, it would probably have been difficult to avoid. The lessons drawn about the later emergence of Napoleon can also be considered from two perspectives: while some consider it an end point of the French Revolution, it can also be seen as a sign that the demons of absolutist power had roots deeper than a hundred-year-old colonial domination.

ERIC SARRIOT
Towson, Md.

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THE REAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE French and American revolutions is that the U.S., a society on a continent whose indigenous inhabitants were militarily weak, could wreak violence at will on social and political outsiders, while the French were hemmed in by strong neighbors. Napoleon's sense of Manifest Destiny was no stronger than that of American leaders. It is a sad commentary on the persistence of racism even today that the execution of 17,000 French citizens is enough to brand the French revolutionaries as unacceptably radical, while here, the slaughter of untold thousands of slaves and American Indians seems to detract not a whit from the moral grandeur of the founding generations that participated in it.

MARC DESMOND
New York City

21st Century Objectives

I AM GLAD TO SEE THAT ENVIRONMENTAL awareness is a primary objective for the 21st century, as described in your issue Beyond 2000 [SPECIAL REPORT, Nov. 8], but simply making it a goal is not enough. Recycling has been in place for more than 10 years, and public apathy is repulsive. People have to realize there is no purpose in bettering mankind and themselves if there is nowhere to live. "If you don't have health, you don't have anything," they say, and yet not many see that the health of the planet is as important as personal well-being. The three Rs—reducing, reusing and recycling—should become a way of life.

BEVERLY WONG
Thornhill, Ont.

Legacy for Hillsdale

IN THE ARTICLE ABOUT DR. GEORGE C. Roche III, who just resigned as president of Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, Mich. [AMERICAN SCENE, Nov. 29], you said that Roche decided "14 years ago not to accept any federal funding or allow his students to accept federal loans." That is inaccurate. My father Dr. James Donald Phillips was the president of Hillsdale prior to Dr. Roche. When my father was president, he took a strong stand against the school's accepting federal aid. This occurred long before Dr. Roche took the helm of the school.

MACWAIN PHILLIPS
Emeryville, Calif.

War Against Dirty Diamonds

AFTER READING YOUR STORY ABOUT traders using diamonds to fund the civil war in Angola [WORLD, Dec. 6], we wish



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JEFFREY FISCHER, PRESIDENT
BEN KINZLER, GENERAL COUNSEL
*Diamond Manufacturers & Importers
Association of America
New York City*

What's Hair Got to Do with It?

IN YOUR REPORT ON THE MEETING between Suha Arafat, Yasser Arafat's wife, and Hillary Clinton [WORLD, Dec. 6], you referred to Suha's "bottle-blond tresses." I never knew that hair color was a quality that determined the competence of an individual. Perhaps to be fair minded you should also have commented on the tresses of Hillary Clinton; her

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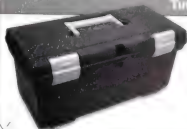
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—Angie L. Orlando, FL

Sometimes I think exterminators scare me more than they do pests. Maybe it's the uniform, maybe it's the hard hats, but when I see them getting out of their trucks with protective clothing and tanks full of dangerous chemicals, I begin to wonder. I have small children, a dog and a cat, so I'm not too keen on the idea of somebody bombarding my home and yard with dangerous chemicals. On the other hand, I'm not too fond of spiders, cockroaches and other common household pests. Recently, a neighbor of mine told me about a revolutionary new way of ridding my home of pests without endangering my family. It's called PestContro®.

Double trouble for pests. PestContro combines electromagnetic technology and ultrasonic waves to solve a variety of household pest problems. This amazing device uses your home's existing electrical wiring to create a shifting electro-magnetic field. This creates an environment that is uncomfortable for pests, driving them from their hiding places in walls, ceilings and floors. Simultaneously, a harsh, ultrasonic siren blasts sound from the unit's dual speakers. This sound is inaudible to humans, but it creates an incredible disturbance for pests. In two to four weeks, the pests are driven from the area.

Safe and effective. Even though it makes life unbearable for a variety of insects, rodents and other pests, PestContro is harmless to children and household pets, such as cats, dogs, fish and birds. The unit features a two-setting intensity selector that allows you to adjust the setting for those house hold pests that may be affected by certain pitches, like lizards, hamsters and gerbils.

Just plug it in. Simply place the PestContro unit in a centrally located area and it goes to work immediately, using a new technology called "phase-shift-current." By shifting the electromagnetic field throughout the home's wiring, it controls pests in the walls, ceilings and floors, where the majority of pests live. This interference covers an area of up to 5,000 square feet. Then, the dual speakers each blast 120 db of ultrasonic sound. You can use the intensity selector to customize your control. Lower ultrasonic sounds tend to influence larger creatures, such as rats, lizards, roaches and spiders. The higher setting is more irritating to smaller pests, such as ants, ticks, fleas

and other insects.

Practical features. In addition to selecting the intensity, you can use the pitch selector to choose a fixed pitch or a variable pitch that sweeps within a range of ultrasonic frequencies. You can hear the difference by pushing the Test button, which lowers the ultrasonic frequencies to an audible level. The Radom On/Off setting automatically turns each speaker on and off randomly to keep pests from becoming accustomed to the ultrasonic sounds. There's even a Floor Night Light for placement in a

hall or dimly lit area. Each LED represents different properties of PestContro. The Red LED flashes continually when the unit is powered. The Green LEDs represent sound emitted from each of the speakers and flash randomly in the Variable setting. Since it uses less electricity to operate than a 40 watt light bulb, it costs just pennies a day to operate.

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hair today is virtually the same shade as Suha's. But Hillary has not been a natural blond since she was a child. Maybe the two women even use the same commercial shade! Let's forget the size, colors and looks of people and speak of their ability to do their job.

SAHRA COXE
Birmingham, Ala.

Dealing with Cuba

THANKS FOR THE INFORMATIVE ARTICLE about Cuba and the possibility of lifting the U.S. trade embargo (WORLD, Dec. 6). It's high time the U.S. establish full diplomatic relations and free trade with that nation. Only by free and open communications, diplomacy and trade will we encourage Cuba to inch toward democracy. You can influence people more effectively when you're talking to them than when you're ignoring them.

C.L. GUTHRIE JR.
Spartanburg, S.C.

HOW MUCH SENSE DOES IT MAKE TO trade with China, the most communistic, militaristic and anti-human rights regime on the planet, and not to trade with Cuba, which poses absolutely no threat to our national security? The 37-year trade embargo against Castro's Cuba has not yielded any appreciable results and unequivocally should cease.

GENE CARTON
St. Louis, Mo.

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Suddenly, lowering my high cholesterol became even more important than football.

Dan Reeves, Atlanta Head Coach

Only six weeks before one of the most important games of my life, I felt a strange pain in my chest – and wanted to ignore it. I mentioned it to my doctor, who encouraged me to get it checked out the next day. What they found was unlike any opponent I had ever faced: three of my arteries were more than 90 percent blocked. I was suffering from heart disease and had to undergo emergency bypass surgery. Fortunately, I had a full recovery, and was even able to coach my team in the biggest game of the season four weeks later. Looking back, I wish I had done some of the things I am doing now to take better care of myself. Some of those things include a better diet, regular exercise, and taking ZOCOR to help get my total cholesterol down to a healthier 185. When added to a healthy lifestyle, ZOCOR can help people with high cholesterol and heart disease live a longer, fuller life by reducing the risk of a heart attack. **Important considerations:** ZOCOR is a prescription medication, so you should ask your doctor or healthcare professional if ZOCOR is right for you. ZOCOR isn't for everyone, including women who are pregnant or nursing or who may become pregnant, people who are allergic to any of its ingredients, or anyone with liver disease. Unexplained muscle pain or weakness could be a sign of a rare but serious side effect and should be reported to your doctor right away. Your doctor may do simple blood tests before and during treatment with ZOCOR to check for liver problems. Be sure your doctor knows about medications you may be taking in order to avoid any serious drug interactions. With so much to look forward to, don't let high cholesterol and heart disease take you out of the game. For more information call 1-800-397-7171 or visit www.zocor.com. Talk to your doctor to see if ZOCOR is right for you.

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USES OF ZOCOR

ZOCOR is a prescription drug that is indicated as an addition to diet for many patients with high cholesterol when diet and exercise are inadequate. For patients with coronary heart disease (CHD) and high cholesterol, ZOCOR is indicated as an addition to diet to reduce the risk of death by reducing coronary death, to reduce the risk of heart attack, to reduce the risk for undergoing cardiac procedures (coronary artery bypass grafting and percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty), and to reduce the risk of stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA).

WHEN ZOCOR SHOULD NOT BE USED

Some people should not take ZOCOR. Discuss this with your doctor:

ZOCOR should not be used by patients who are allergic to any of its ingredients. In addition to the active ingredient simvastatin, each tablet contains the following inactive ingredients: cellulose, lactose, magnesium stearate, iron oxides, titanium dioxide, and starch. Butylated hydroxyanisole is added as a preservative.

Patients with liver problems: ZOCOR should not be used by patients with active liver disease or repeated blood test results indicating possible liver problems. (See WARNINGS.)

Women who are or may become pregnant: Pregnant women should not take ZOCOR because it may harm the fetus. **Women of childbearing age should not take ZOCOR unless it is highly unlikely that they will become pregnant.** If a woman does become pregnant while taking ZOCOR, she should stop taking the drug and talk to her doctor at once.

Women who are breast-feeding should not take ZOCOR.

WARNINGS

Muscle: Tell your doctor right away if you experience any unexplained muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness at any time during treatment with ZOCOR so your doctor can decide if ZOCOR should be stopped. Some patients may have muscle pain or weakness while taking ZOCOR. Rarely, this can include muscle breakdown resulting in kidney damage. The risk of muscle breakdown is greater in patients taking certain other drugs along with ZOCOR, such as the lipid-lowering drug Lipid (gemfibrozil), and other fibrates; lipid-lowering doses of niacin (nicotinic acid); Sandimmune (cyclosporine); itraconazole, ketoconazole, and other azole antifungal drugs; the antibiotics erythromycin and clarithromycin; HIV protease inhibitors; and the antidepressant nefazodone. Interruption of therapy with ZOCOR should be considered if you are going to take an azole antifungal medication, such as itraconazole, or macrolide antibiotics, such as erythromycin. Patients using ZOCOR along with any of these other drugs should be carefully monitored by their physician. The risk of muscle breakdown is greater in patients with kidney problems or diabetes.

Because there are risks in combining therapy with ZOCOR with the drugs listed above, your doctor should carefully weigh the potential benefits and risks. He or she should also carefully monitor patients for any muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness, particularly during the initial months of therapy and if the dose of either drug is increased. Your doctor also may monitor the level of certain muscle enzymes in your body, but there is no assurance that such monitoring will prevent the occurrence of severe muscle disease.

If you have conditions that can increase your risk of muscle breakdown, which in turn can cause kidney damage, your doctor should temporarily withhold or stop ZOCOR. Also, since there are no known adverse consequences of briefly stopping therapy with ZOCOR, treatment should be stopped a few days before elective major surgery and when any major acute medical or surgical condition occurs. Discuss this with your doctor, who can explain these conditions to you.

Liver: About 1% of patients who took ZOCOR in clinical trials developed elevated levels of some liver enzymes. Patients who had these increases usually had no symptoms. Elevated liver enzymes usually returned to normal levels when therapy with ZOCOR was stopped.

In the ZOCOR Survival Study, the number of patients with more than one liver enzyme level elevation to greater than 3 times the normal upper limit was no different between the ZOCOR and placebo groups. Only 8 patients on ZOCOR and 5 on placebo discontinued therapy due to elevated liver enzyme levels. Patients were started on 20 mg of ZOCOR, and one third had their dose raised to 40 mg.

Your doctor should perform routine blood tests to check these enzymes before you start treatment with ZOCOR and periodically thereafter (for example, semiannually) for your first year of treatment or until 1 year after your last elevation in dose. Patients titrated to the 80-mg dose should receive an additional test at 3 months. If your enzyme levels increase, your doctor should order more frequent tests. If your liver enzyme levels remain unusually high, your doctor should discontinue your medication.

Tell your doctor about any liver disease you may have had in the past and about how much alcohol you consume. ZOCOR should be used with caution in patients who consume large amounts of alcohol.

PRECAUTIONS

Before starting treatment with ZOCOR[®] (simvastatin) try to lower your cholesterol by other methods such as diet, exercise, and weight loss. Ask your doctor about how best to do this. Any other medical problems that can cause high cholesterol should also be treated.

Drug Interactions: Because of possible serious drug interactions, it is important to tell your doctor what other drugs you are taking, including those obtained without a prescription.

ZOCOR can interact with cyclosporine (Sandimmune), itraconazole, ketoconazole, Lipid, niacin, erythromycin, clarithromycin, HIV protease inhibitors, and nefazodone. (See WARNINGS, Muscle.)

Some patients taking lipid-lowering agents similar to ZOCOR and coumarin anticoagulants (a type of blood thinner) have experienced bleeding and/or increased blood clotting time. Patients taking these medicines should have their blood tested before starting therapy with ZOCOR and should continue to be monitored.

Central Nervous System Toxicity, Cancer, Mutations, Impairment of Fertility: Like most prescription drugs, ZOCOR was required to be tested on animals before it was marketed for human use. Often these tests were designed to achieve higher drug concentrations than humans achieve at recommended dosing. In some tests, the animals had damage to the nerves in the central nervous system. In studies of mice with high doses of ZOCOR, the likelihood of certain types of cancerous tumors increased. No evidence of mutations or of damage to genetic material has been seen. In one study with ZOCOR, there was decreased fertility in male rats.

Pregnancy: Pregnant women should not take ZOCOR because it may harm the fetus.

Safety in pregnancy has not been established. In studies with lipid-lowering agents similar to ZOCOR, there have been rare reports of birth defects of the skeleton and digestive system. Therefore, women of childbearing age should not take ZOCOR unless it is highly unlikely they will become pregnant. If a woman does become pregnant while taking ZOCOR, she should stop taking the drug and talk to her doctor at once. The active ingredient of ZOCOR did not cause birth defects in rats at 3 times the human dose or in rabbits at 3 times the human dose.

Nursing Mothers: Drugs taken by nursing mothers may be present in their breast milk. Because of the potential for serious adverse reactions in nursing infants, a woman taking ZOCOR should not breast-feed. (See WHEN ZOCOR SHOULD NOT BE USED.)

Pediatric Use: ZOCOR is not recommended for children or patients under 20 years of age.

SIDE EFFECTS

Most patients tolerate treatment with ZOCOR well; however, like all prescription drugs, ZOCOR can cause side effects, and some of them can be serious. Side effects that do occur are usually mild and short-lived. Only your doctor can weigh the risks versus the benefits of any prescription drug. In clinical studies with ZOCOR—less than 1% of patients dropped out of the studies because of side effects. In a large, long-term study, patients taking ZOCOR experienced similar side effects to those patients taking placebo (sugar pills). Some of the side effects that have been reported with ZOCOR or related drugs are listed below. This list is not complete. Be sure to ask your doctor about side effects before taking ZOCOR and to discuss any side effects that occur.

Digestive System: Constipation, diarrhea, upset stomach, gas, heartburn, stomach pain/cramps, anorexia, loss of appetite, nausea, inflammation of the pancreas, hepatitis, jaundice, fatty changes in the liver, and rarely, severe liver damage and failure, cirrhosis, and liver cancer.

Muscle, Skeletal: Muscle cramps, aches, pain, and weakness; joint pain, muscle breakdown.

Nervous System: Dizziness, headache, insomnia, tingling, memory loss, damage to nerves causing weakness and/or loss of sensation and/or abnormal sensations, anxiety, depression, tremor, loss of balance, psychic disturbances.

Skin: Rash, itching, hair loss, dryness, nodules, discoloration.

Eyes/Senses: Blurred vision, altered taste sensation, progression of cataracts, eye muscle weakness.

Hypersensitivity (Allergic) Reactions: On rare occasions, a wide variety of symptoms have been reported to occur either alone or together in groups (referred to as a syndrome) that appeared to be based on allergic-type reactions, which may rarely be fatal. These have included one or more of the following: a severe generalized reaction that may include shortness of breath, wheezing, digestive symptoms, and low blood pressure and even shock; an allergic reaction with swelling of the face, lips, tongue and/or throat with difficulty swallowing or breathing; symptoms mimicking lupus (a disorder in which a person's immune system may attack parts of his or her own body); severe muscle and blood vessel inflammation, bruising, various disorders of blood cells (that could result in anemia, infection, or blood clotting problems) or abnormal blood tests; inflamed or painful joints; hives, fatigue and weakness, sensitivity to sunlight, fever, chills, flushing, difficulty breathing, and severe skin disorders that vary from rash to a serious burn-like shedding of skin all over the body, including mucous membranes such as the lining of the mouth.

Other: Loss of sexual desire, breast enlargement, impotence.

Laboratory Tests: Liver function test abnormalities including elevated alkaline phosphatase and bilirubin, thyroid function abnormalities.

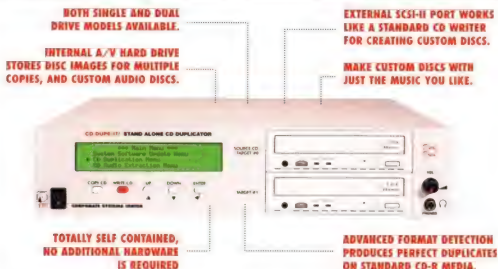
NOTE: This summary provides important information about ZOCOR. If you would like more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist to let you read the professional labeling and then discuss it with them.

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Dual 8x20 model is pictured above.

INDICATORS

HEALTH Where Americans are fattest and fittest, measured by obesity rates, exercise and number of fast-food joints

Fattest cities



Fittest cities



TV NEWS Despite big stories like Columbine and the death of J.F.K. Jr., the war in Kosovo drew the most coverage

Top news stories* in minutes of TV coverage

Kosovo conflict	1,644
Clinton sex scandal	460
Columbine high school shootings	298
N.Y.S.E. and NASDAQ market action	266
Hurricane Floyd	227
EgyptAir 990 crash	177
Death of John F. Kennedy Jr.	166
Tornado season	131
Health-care reform	123
Guns	120

*On evening network newscasts, Jan. 1 through Nov. 30, 1999. Source: The Audit Report

CHRISTMAS SPECIALS Even before *It's a Wonderful Life* (now an NBC exclusive) became a holiday staple, CBS's animated classics were getting us into the spirit

Longest running

Years on TV

<i>Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer</i>	36
<i>A Charlie Brown Christmas</i>	35
<i>Frosty the Snowman</i>	31
<i>A Garfield Christmas</i>	11

Sources: CBS, NBC

CHARITY 87% of Americans say it's up to community volunteers to help when government programs don't do enough

Percent of adults who do volunteer work

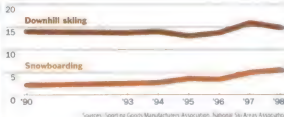
U.S.	50%
INDIA	32%
BRAZIL	26%
FRANCE	19%
GERMANY	17%
HONG KONG	12%
JAPAN	11%

From interviews with 1,087 adults taken by Market/Prize International of I.T.V. and Opinion Research Corp. of Princeton, N.J.
Source: Lions Clubs International

SNOWBOARDERS Their ranks are growing—and they ride more days per year than their Alpine counterparts

Popularity

Millions of participants



Sources: Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association, National Ski Areas Association

VIDEOS Tom Hanks has two Christmas movie hits, as well as two of the year's top video rentals

Top 10 video rentals*

Times rented (millions)

<i>There's Something About Mary</i>	26.4
<i>Rush Hour</i>	22.4
<i>Saving Private Ryan</i>	21.7
<i>The Waterboy</i>	21.7
<i>You've Got Mail</i>	19.4
<i>The Truman Show</i>	19.3
<i>Enemy of the State</i>	19.2
<i>Stepmom</i>	18.2
<i>SNAKE EYES</i>	16.3
<i>The Matrix</i>	15.8

*Jan. 4 through Dec. 5, 1999. Source: Video Software Dealers Association

CHRISTMAS TREES Most people with no tree say they are not at home for the holiday or too busy to put one up

Percent who have

An artificial tree: 40.6%

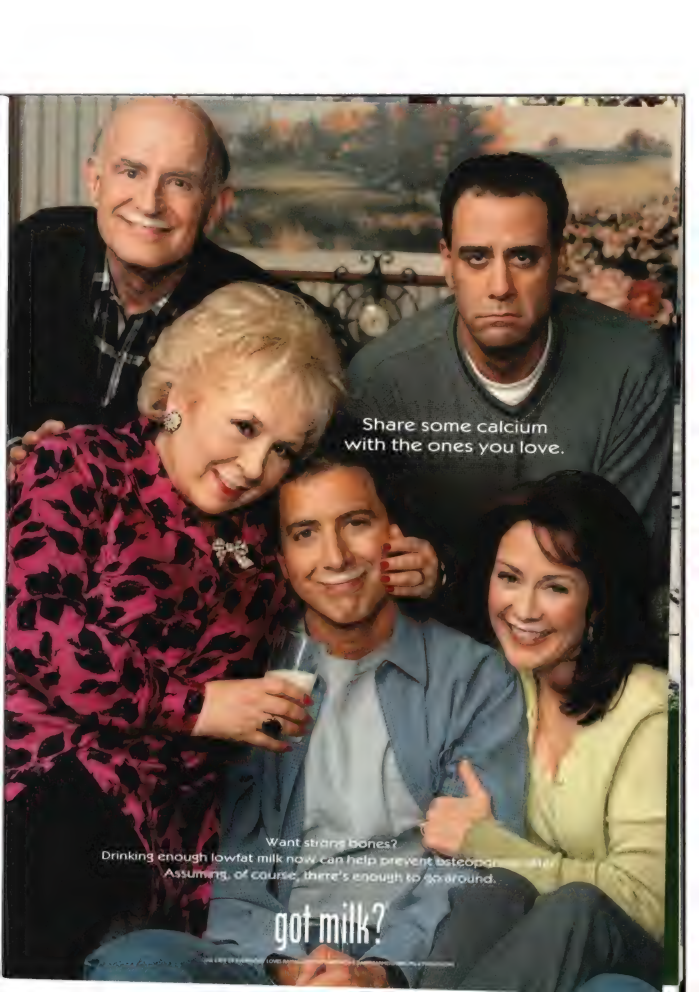
A real tree: 35.4%

No tree: 23%



1998 average price, real tree: \$27.87

Source: National Christmas Tree Association



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Assuming, of course, there's enough to go around.

got milk?

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SHOULD AULD CENTURIES BE FORGOT ... If years are parties, 1999 was a knees-up with a Latin beat, where new millionaires and young sports heroes were welcome. So, Reece and Tiger, Anakin and Heather, Austin, Serena, Ricky, Rudy, Hillary, Lance, Darth, Pikachu, Chris, Brandi, Harry and Sloba too—party like it's 1999. We did fix that Y2K thing, right?

RECAP '99

THE YEAR IN ELEPHANTS AND GOD'S PEOPLE

HEAVENLY

Pope's visit to Mexico is sponsored by Frito-Lay, which issues chip packets with J.P.'s head



The USDA charges Beatty-Cole circus with elephant abuse

Exhibition with painting of Virgin Mary decorated with elephant dung causes uproar



Playwright Terence McNally gets death threats over gay Jesus in *Corpus Christi*



G.O.P. candidates Bush, Bauer, Keyes invoke Jesus in a campaign debate

HELLISH

International ban on ivory trading is lifted

Thai elephant steps on land mine; survives, gets artificial foot

Kevin Smith's movie *Dogma* opens to Catholic protest

Illustration by C. F. Payne for TIME

ARE YOU MY MOMMY? Jazz, an endangered African wildcat, last week became the first mammal to be born from a frozen embryo implanted in a house cat. But she's not the first rare animal to use a common species' womb. A bongo antelope was born to an eland in 1984 at the Cincinnati Zoo, and two Holsteins, one in Cincinnati and one at the Bronx Zoo, have given birth to gaur, a rare species of wild cattle.



AP/WIDEWORLD



AP/WIDEWORLD

DEFENSE MECHANISMS

Semper Fine! Marines Get the Ride of Their Life

THE MARINES, ALWAYS PROUD OF THEIR mud-and-blood traditions, will soon be tooling around in swank, new Mercedes-Benz sport-utes. The World War II-designed jeeps have finally worn out, and the Marines decided that the Mercedes Geländewagen best meets its need for a rugged off-road vehicle small enough to fit into helicopters. Most of the 62 vehi-



Beyond the jeep

cles have been sent to bases in California and North Carolina, and the final dozen will be delivered to Marines in Okinawa in time for Christmas.

The four-wheel-drive, five-cylinder turbodiesel Benzes cost about \$5 million, or \$80,000 apiece. The new interim fast-attack vehicle (obviously a name chosen by the corps, not the manufacturer) comes in military green, with a canvas top, and has six seats—two more than the jeep. While it may lack the fancy seats and stereos sold to civilians, the IFAV does sport mounts for assorted machine guns and grenade-launchers, as well as a snorkel that will keep air flowing to the engine in 30-in.-deep water.

—By Mark Thompson/Washington

EXCLUSIVE

Teamsters' New Fight Targets Old Enemies

THE TEAMSTERS ARE ABOUT TO FILE A CIVIL suit under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act—a law often used in the past by the government to combat Mob influence in labor. One target of the suit: Teamster ex-president **RON CAREY**, ejected from the union in 1997 after a finding that his 1996 run for the top job was tainted by campaign-finance abuses.

Sources tell TIME the suit could also name the Democratic National Committee and **RICHARD TRUMKA**, No. 2 at the AFL-CIO. Current Teamster president **JAMES P. HOFFA** says he and his legal team will "soon decide" who gets named.

By trying to show that Carey's bid was a



James P. Hoffa

"corrupt enterprise," the suit will seek to recover some \$3 million in union funds spent as a result of the election. Trumka is alleged to have steered AFL-CIO funds to the Carey campaign; he took the

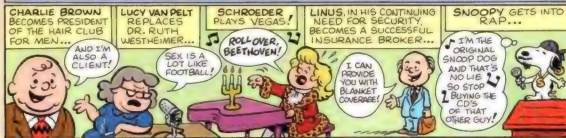
Fifth when called before a congressional investigation into the scandal. Federal prosecutors have alleged the D.N.C. was also funneling money to Carey.

Carey, Trumka and the D.N.C. have all said they did nothing improper. The suit could be a blow to the Democrats' presidential hopes by splitting a labor movement they were counting on for united support.

—By Adam Zagorin/Washington

THE DRAWING BOARD

WITH CHARLES SCHULZ RETIRING, WHAT WILL BECOME OF HIS BELOVED 'PEANUTS' CHARACTERS? LET US GAZE INTO THE CULTURAL JET LAG CRYSTAL BALL AND SEE WHAT WE WILL SEE...



1999

WINNERS & LOSERS

BILL CLINTON

Survives impeachment, wins (sorta) in Kosovo, still (pretty) popular. You the (Alpha) man!

LAURYN HILL

Miseducation? Ha. 'Twas a five-Grammy year. Make album No. 2 good or you're '90s Carole King

LANCE ARMSTRONG

Spandex surprise: overcomes testicular cancer, churlish sponsors—except Postal Service—to win Tour de France

J.K. ROWLING

Harry Potter creator gets kids to bag TV, Nintendo for (!!) reading. And without a Happy Meal tie-in!

GEORGE W. BUSH

Compassion Boy has stumbled. But any year you raise \$60 mil and get in front ain't all bad

BRANDI CHASTAIN

The Bra that Shook the World. Soccer stunt was hit, but don't try it on any (eek!) senior tour

RICKY MARTIN

Living large, amigo. Will his vida be more enduring than the Macarena? Those hips help

POKEMON

Annoying Japanese critters stole kids' hearts—just as we were warming to Beanie Babies

INVESTORS

The '90s make '80s look like '30s. Who cares if it's all tech-driven frenzy? W&L is going public

REGIS PHILBIN

Turns 65, and Millionaire is hot hit. Time to lose faux-margarine ads

SLOBODAN MILOSEVIC
Then: kicks Albanians out of Kosovo. Now: Serbs out of Kosovo, land in ruins. Nice job

AL GORE

Year begins with big lead, ends with you as punchline. Lose Naomi, embrace inner geek

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

Senate campaign off to shaky start. But Rudy's a hothead, and '00 might be your year

KEN STARR

Want "facts"? Clinton and Susan McDougal got off; Tripp's on trial. Shoulda done Pepperdine

WOODSTOCK '99

'99 version of boomer event was, like, so messed up, dude. Next, Lilith Fair PMS riots?

BILL GATES

Judge sez he's predatory monopolist. Hit ESC, cop a plea and finish cleaning Windows

WEN HO LEE

Arrested after year of FBI in rearview mirror. Guilty or not, shoulda been a tad more careful with floppies

BORIS YELTSIN

Economy? Chaos. Chechnya? Quagmire. Popular? Nyet. Get yourself to an A.A. meeting and a sponsor

DAN GOLDIN

NASA boss sees Mars probes screw up. Time to put Pikachu in space?

ROBERT DOWNEY JR.

Gets jail time for drug mayhem. Can't green-light you, kid, but Gandhi did best work in prison

MOVIE/ENTERTAINMENT

RECAP '99

THE YEAR IN RAPPERS AND WOMEN OF A CERTAIN AGE

BITCHIN

Of Dirty Bastard pulled over for driving erratically



Rosa Parks tries to prevent DuKant from using her name in a song

Women of a certain age



Patricia Stewart reveals her diva in masturbator



Rapper Eminem sued by his mother for defamation



Martha Stewart takes her company public

Of Dirty Bastard arrested for driving with a suspended license and possessing crack

Sean ("Puffy") Combs charged with attacking a record executive



Diana Rowe detained at a London airport

COWED

Happy 100th Birthday
PAPA

[1901-1992]



One of the Best Last Lists of the Century

ANOTHER REASON TO CELEBRATE on New Year's Eve: it will be 100 years before we have to read Best of the Century lists again. Here are some Worst of the Century.

10 Greatest Inventions of the 20th Century chosen by Guinness Book of Records: Rubik's Cube, the Walkman and Tupperware made the cut; computers didn't.

Top 50 Erotic Personalities of the Millennium chosen by readers of the *British Erotic Review*: No. 1, Marilyn Monroe; No. 4, Margaret Thatcher.

Top 100 American Speeches of the 20th Century chosen by 137 public-speaking experts: "Checkers" speech nabbs No. 6 spot, beating out Reagan's *Challenger* eulogy and Malcolm X's "Ballot or the Bullet."

Top 100 Catholics of the Century chosen by *Daily Catholic* website. Isn't the first meant to be last?

The 50 Worst Books of the Century chosen by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute: Margaret Mead gets top spot. ISI is apparently unfamiliar with the Jackie Collins canon.

100 Luminaries Who Left Their Mark on the Home-Improvement Industry chosen by *National Home Center News*. Riveting.



They Would Be Speechless

NINETEEN NINETY-NINE WAS A BIG YEAR FOR MEMORIALS. HUMPHREY BOGART, DUKE Ellington, Fred Astaire and Noël Coward, among others, would have been 100, Pushkin 200, and it was International Chopin Year, marking the 150th anniversary of the composer's death. While some were celebrated reverentially, others received more bizarre treatments.

- Papa's got a brand new shirt—or two. One with a facsimile of Ernest Hemingway's birth certificate and the other with this year's annual commemorative portrait. Perfect for cleaning your trawler.
- Nothing says creepy like a Hitchcock movie, except perhaps the Hitchcock 100th-birthday edition of *Clue* or the commemorative Bates Motel shower curtain or robe. QVC's Hitchcock beanbag bear was scary in a whole other way.
- What better way to toast the 200th anniversary of Alexander Pushkin's birth than with a Pushkin vodka and a box of Pushkin chocolates? Perhaps

with a visit to Yakutia, which touted itself as the place where Pushkin's friends were exiled.

- As well as by concerts, the week of Chopin's death was marked by mimes, jazz interpretations, and—yikes!—the premier of Billy Joel's first classical piece, the Chopin-inspired *Reverie*.
- For the sesquicentennial of Goethe's birth, 250 illuminated busts of the German poet were lined up in a meadow in downtown Weimar. Fans could buy stockings imprinted with his lyrics or a vibrator bearing his likeness. An exhibition of his drawings was hung at Buchenwald.

RECAP '99

THE YEAR IN MOGULS BEHAVING BADLY AND LITTLE PEOPLE

RICHLY
DESERVED



During a custody battle, billionaire Ron Perelman claims he can feed his daughter Cateigh on \$3 a day

SHORT-
CHANGED



Michael Eisner says he may have called Jeffrey Katzenberg a "little midget"



Little people

Moguls behaving badly

New Austin Powers movie makes a star of Mini-Me actor Verne Troyer

Summer Redstone's wife files for divorce as he is alleged to be having an affair



Gary Coleman fined for allegedly punching an autograph seeker in the eye



Justice Dept. rules Bill Gates' Microsoft Corp. is a monopoly

Cuban boy found floating in ocean causes international uproar

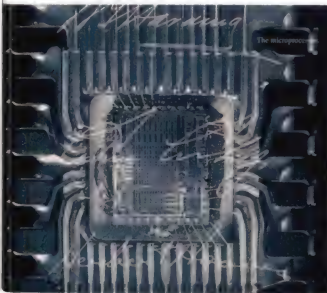
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MILESTONES

TRANSFERRED. THE PANAMA CANAL, 50-mile engineering feat, shipping lane and cruise-ship highlight; after 96 years of U.S. control: to Panama. At a ceremonial hand-over, Jimmy Carter, who brokered the transfer treaty in 1977, told Panama's President Mireya Moscoso, "It's yours."

RETIRED. CHARLES SCHULZ, 77, *Peanuts* creator, whose angst-ridden Charlie Brown has been a staple of funny pages for nearly 50 years; on Jan. 4, because of colon cancer (see story, page 146).



DIED. GROVER WASHINGTON JR., 56, smooth Philadelphia blues and jazz-funk saxophonist, after playing four songs and collapsing at a taping of a CBS-TV show; in New York City. Washington made more than two dozen albums but is best known for the sax solo on his 1981 hit song *Just the Two of Us*.

DIED. KEN W. CLAWSON, 63, director of communications for the Nixon White House in its final months; of a heart attack; in New Orleans. A staunch loyalist before and after the resignation, he once told the *New York Times*, "I'm just one of Richard Nixon's spear carriers and proud of it."

DIED. JOSEPH HELLER, 76, darkly comic novelist and World War II veteran whose classic *Catch-22* detailed the madness of war; in East Hampton, N.Y. The famous catch he created in 1961: "If



[a pilot] flew [missions] he was crazy and didn't have to; but if he didn't want to be he was sane and he had to" (see Eulogy).

DIED. C. VANN WOODWARD, 91, Pulitzer-prizewinning historian and perceptive chronicler of the post-Civil War South; in Hamden, Conn. He was perhaps best known for *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (1955), which argued that segregation in the South was a fairly recent phenomenon and thus could be undone.

DIED. PAUL CADMUS, 94, controversial artist known for his satirical, near-illustrational style; in Weston, Conn. He gained fame in 1934 when Navy officials yanked his painting *The Fleet's In* from a show because it depicted sailors with a gay man and prostitutes.

NUMBERS



8,000,000 Number

of times the Righteous Brothers' *You've Lost*

That Lovin' Feelin' has been played on American radio and television, making it the most played song of the century

45 Years of back-to-back play this represents

6 Percentage of Americans who chose "efficient" as the top adjective for the U.S. government

39 Percentage who chose "bureaucratic"



\$7.5 billion Estimated

1999 North American box-office gross for Hollywood films, up from \$6.8 billion last year

\$5 billion Estimated 1999 U.S. gross for adult-film industry, same as last year



12,000 Sheets of paper, on average, used by each U.S. office worker a year

30 Percentage of the world's paper used by Americans

57 Percentage of paper not recycled

Sources: BMI; USA Today; Variety; Adult video news; Market Research Inc.; Worldwatch Institute

EULOGY

JOSEPH HELLER used to say he'd rather have a big meal than a good one. His friends were used to him grabbing the waiter to demand two large spoons and digging in first. One evening, when a huge bowl of soup was placed on the table, Joe announced, "Gentlemen, I'll serve." We watched in awe as he filled a bowl, wondering what had come over him. Then, instead of passing the soup to anyone, he just said, "Now you serve." We were relieved. We wanted him just the way he was—irascible and incorrigible. His passions were books, music and friends.

For a while, his East Hampton doorman read *GO AWAY*, and his roar and mane were leonine. But underneath that mask of grumpiness was



one of the softest and kindest men I've ever met. He was constantly interweaving the lives of the people he knew, making sure they were cared for. Joe could be gleeful as a schoolboy about the success of *Catch-22*, and he often said how grateful he was for the G.I. Bill—otherwise he wouldn't have been able to afford college.

One day Mario Puzo joined us for lunch and mentioned how he used to play three wishes as a kid but had now reduced them to one: "To die in my sleep." These two good friends did exactly that. It makes the grieving a little bit easier when people get what they wish. —*Speed Vogel*, co-author of *No Laughing Matter*, which deals with Heller's struggle with Guillain-Barré syndrome

PERSON OF THE YEAR

Location: <http://www.jeffbezosispersonoftheyear.time.com/>

The fast-moving Internet a jung

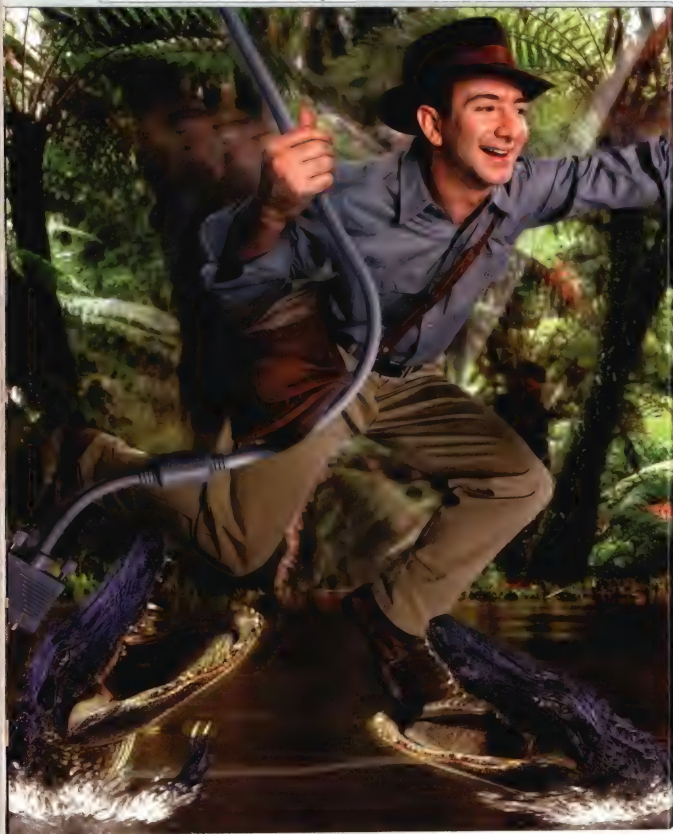


et economy has
gle of competitors ...



PERSON OF THE YEAR

Location: <http://www.jeffbezosispersonoftheyear.time.com/>





amazon.com

... and here's the king

JEFFREY PRESTON BEZOS • 1999 PERSON OF THE YEAR

It's one of those perfect autumn nights

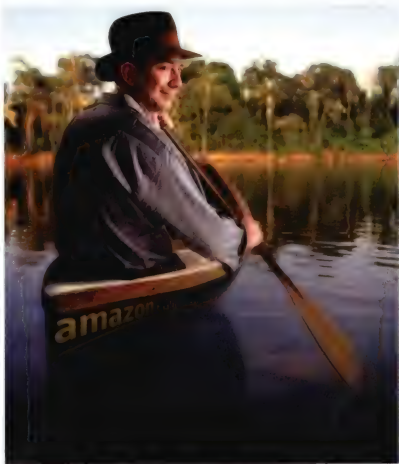
There is not a cloud in the sky, and looking up from the streets, you can feel the air—just enough to ice the occasional breath—and the urgent roar of the modern world. The NASDAQ is at a record high. Again. New companies are

THIS YEAR IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PERFECT night for a launch party. This year it's as if "ideagethemoney-hireCEOlaunchpartyIPO" has become one big, fast millennial screech. Companies that barely existed a year ago are publicly traded, their founders ungodly wealthy. Some argue the world has entered a long boom, a kind of economic speed loop, where the centrifugal force spins off nothing but wealth and happiness. And launch parties. So up and off an elevator you go, melting into an unimaginably beautiful crowd. Every woman looks like a model; every man looks, well, Italian. This is an Internet party, right? What on earth could they be selling? A sign on the wall reminds you: this is the launch party for Beauty.com.

And it is a lovely site: cosmetics tips, fragrance guides, a look at the latest European lip glosses. "Oh, come on," you're probably saying, "who is going to buy cosmetics online? If there is one thing no one will buy online, it's cosmetics. You've got to see how it looks, after all." But wait a minute. Didn't you say the same thing about books? "Who would buy books online? You have to be able to flip through the pages." And wasn't it you who said, "I'd never buy plane tickets online. I can't imagine not talking to my travel agent!" And mortgages? And toys? Concert tickets and CDs? "But I'd never," you said. Yes, you will. You are.

This year you'll buy about \$15 billion worth of consumer goods online. Businesses will spend an additional \$109 billion buying from one another. And while those numbers are but a small part of the overall retail economy—which clocks in at \$2.7 trillion—e-business is rapidly replacing the traditional kind for almost any purchase you can imagine. By the time the ribbons are off the packages this week, Americans will have spent \$5 billion online for holiday gifts—more than twice as much as last year.

It's easy to sit here today nodding about the power of electrified commerce. But back in the day when you—frankly, when everyone—was pooh-poohing the idea of online sales, there were a few folks who believed. One of them, on a summer day in 1994, quit his lucrative job at a New York City investment firm, packed up and, with his wife driving, made a



now legendary voyage to Seattle to start what he thought would be a good business. By the time he arrived there he had a plan to sell books over the Internet. Investors thought he was crazy.

Every time a seismic shift takes place in our economy, there are people who feel the vibrations long before the rest of us do, vibrations so strong they demand action—action that can seem rash, even stupid. Ferry owner Cornelius Vanderbilt jumped ship when he saw the railroads coming. Thomas Watson Jr., overwhelmed by his sense that computers would be everywhere even when they were nowhere, bet his father's office-machine company on it: IBM.

Jeffrey Preston Bezos had that same experience when he

Photo-illustrations for TIME by Aaron Goodman

s that make Manhattan seem magical.

see stars. On the avenues, white lights speckle the trees. There is a chill in the city is a reminder that New York at this moment may be the Rome of the being born. It is a perfect night for a launch party. BY JOSHUA COOPER RAMO

first peered into the maze of connected computers called the World Wide Web and realized that the future of retailing was glowing back at him. It's not that nobody else noticed—eBay's Pierre Omidyar also knew he was on to something. But Bezos' vision of the online retailing universe was so complete, his Amazon.com site so elegant and appealing, that it became from Day One the point of reference for anyone who had anything to sell online. And that, it turns out, is everyone.

There was a time when Bezos could say, "If I had a nickel for every time a potential investor told me this wouldn't work..." and then lapse off into head shaking. Now he follows that line with a wild, giggly laugh. No wonder: as of last week, Bezos had 200 billion nickels. A rich reward, to be sure, but how on earth can you compensate a man who can see the future? Perhaps by inaugurating him into that club of men and women selected for having had, "for better or worse," the biggest impact in a given year. Welcome, Jeff Bezos, to TIME's Person of the Year club. As befits a new-era entrepreneur, at 35 you are the fourth youngest individual ever, preceded by 25-year-old Charles Lindbergh in 1927; Queen Elizabeth II, who made the list in 1952 at age 26; and Martin Luther King Jr., who was 34 when he was selected in 1963. A pioneer, royalty and a revolutionary—noble company for the man who is, unquestionably, king of cybercommerce.

As far as names go, Amazon is a perfect choice. (Not least because its ticker symbol, AMZN, is a license-plate version of how the stock has performed.) The wild Amazon River, with its limitless branches, remains an ideal metaphor for a company that now sells everything from power tools to CDs, and is eagerly looking for new areas of expansion. It's possible to argue that Bezos didn't master much more than an evolution of commerce, replacing old-fashioned stores with a centralized sales and shipping center. But even that one change, he notes, grabbing a favorite word, is "huge." For old-line businesses like K Mart, getting new customers meant building new stores at a cost of millions. For Bezos, serving new customers costs next to nothing.

And he is still losing his pants. That's maybe the one thing people still really don't understand about the e-commerce revolution. If these are such hot businesses, then why are they hemorrhaging cash? Amazon—the company everyone wants to be like—could lose nearly \$350 million this year. O.K., the Net is different, but don't profits and losses matter anymore? They do. Bezos insists Amazon's oldest businesses—books, music and video—will be profitable by the end of 2000.

But Amazon's losses are also a sign of the New Economics of Internet commerce. These new rules spring from the idea that in the new global marketplace whoever has the most information wins. While it used to be sellers who had all the information, buyers are getting smarter and smarter. At sites like *mysimon.com*, it's possible to go shopping and search not only Amazon but also the collections of two dozen other booksellers

to find the best deal. And in coming years—heck, at Net speed, in coming months—it will be possible to find the cheapest price on just about anything: wines, CDs, perhaps even body parts.

No venture captures these new infonomics better than eBay, the four-year-old auction site. The eBay miracle isn't that it allows you to clean out your attic at a profit—though that's not a bad invention—but that it changes the whole way that we set prices. On eBay, buyers get to decide what something is worth, so objects migrate closer to their true value. Recently a Maine antiques store put an old-fashioned calculator up for sale on eBay for \$100. Within a few days the calculator-loving collectors of the Web had bid the price up to \$6,500. The antiques sellers had had no idea that they were sitting on a gem. But the Web's information-driven economics helped find the right price.

Applied to the world of calculators, that's something of a curiosity. But applied to everyday retail, it's a revolution. The idea of fixed prices is only about 100 years old. Before then nearly everything was negotiable. The last great retail revolution was mail order, led by Sears, Roebuck in the 1890s, and it solidified the idea of fixed prices, since buyer and seller were often separated by hundreds of miles of rail track. In the Internet age even buyers and sellers separated by 10,000 miles of fiber-optic cable are closer than those prairie purchasers were to Mr. Sears. They are nanoseconds away, and, as is becoming increasingly apparent, speed kills. It kills old economics, it kills old companies and it kills old rules.

Bezos is struggling mightily to make sure it doesn't kill Amazon too. Even as he cuts off competition like eBay by getting into the auction business himself (partnering with no less than Sotheby's), he is also trying to make Amazon a model of i-age shopping. When we buy one book, Amazon's computers can tell us what other people who bought that book purchased (and what they thought of those purchases). Or the site's users can look up the most popular books at their company or in their hometown. A few clicks from Amazon's home page will reveal, rather worryingly, that the three most frequent Amazon purchases in Los Alamos, N.M., are the biography of an East German spy master, a book about the black market for nuclear materials and a history of Soviet espionage.

There is, in all this, a kind of humanness that is exactly the opposite of what online shopping was supposed to be like. Amazon is not a depopulated, *Logan's Run* kind of store. The site allows readers to post their opinions about books, to rate products, to swap anecdotes. As you sit there reading, say, a literate and charming book review from Bangladesh, the real power of the Amazon brand comes home. It is a site that is alive with uncounted species of insight, innovation and intellect. No one predicted that electronic shopping could possibly feel this alive. If it is a sign of an e-world yet to come, a place in which technology allows all of us to shop, communicate and live closer together, then Jeff Bezos has done more than construct an online mall. He's helped build the foundation of our future. ■

PERSON OF THE YEAR

Location: <http://www.jeffbezosispersonoftheyear.time.com/>





AN EYE ON THE FUTURE

**Jeff Bezos merely wants
Amazon.com to be Earth's
biggest seller of everything**

By JOSHUA QUITNER

JEFF BEZOS LOVES BEING ON THE move. He sits in the back of a white van, beaming as usual, surrounded by an entourage of lanky young lieutenants from Amazon.com, the Web's biggest retail store and, someday, if Bezos gets it right, Earth's Biggest Store. The early-morning landscape of southeast Kansas hustles by: wood-frame houses, trailers, motels with lots of pickup trucks in their parking lots, a Kum & Go convenience store, cow pastures and the dull, forever flatness of the prairie. You've heard of places described as cow towns? Coffeyville

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DOG DAYS
Bezos can recall a content and happy childhood



FRUIT OF THE LOONY
Bezos horsing around in high school

MA AND PA
Jackie and Mike Bezos invested in their son. It paid off big



was actually labeled Cow Town on maps on account of the stockyards here. In the 1860s the name was changed to honor Colonel James A. Coffey, who set up a grand trading post on the frontier, selling stuff to Native Americans.

Today's frontier is hidden from the physical world, burbling and buzzing along the interconnected wires, routers and computers of the Net. But the possibilities for trade are far more fabulous than could ever have been imagined 100—or even 10—years ago. That's where Bezos comes in. His van rounds a corner, passes an airfield, heads down a two-lane road and pulls into a long driveway that leads to the biggest warehouse you've ever seen. The place is known as the Coffeyville Distribution Center, and Bezos (pronounced Bay-zos), who's never been here before, is giggling with excitement. He tells the driver to stop so he can snap a picture of a workman pounding a HELP WANTED sign into the turf. Bezos, 35, a meticulous documentarian, is worried that his life is scrolling by too fast to remember, a life that is so fantastic as to verge on the unbelievable. So he takes plenty of pictures and awful, jittery amateur videos. At the very least, they'll help tell his story to

the Bezoses' first child, a boy due in March.

Here in Coffeyville is another piece of the proof that Bezos' early and fervent belief in the Internet—that it would rock retailing, that it would change the way we live—stands as one of the more prescient assumptions ever made by a businessperson. "We're trying to build something lasting," Bezos says, looking at this 850,000-sq.-ft. monument to free trade. The warehouse is stocked with books, CDs, TVs, stereos, video games, software, toys. And yet only 10% of the area is being used. The rest is stretch space, here for the ongoing e-commerce revolution.

BEZOS' REVOLUTION

If all goes according to his daring—some might say outlandish—plan, this warehouse will be at capacity within the next few years and will handle everything: washing machines, cars, rubber gaskets, Prozac, exercise machines, marmalade, model airplanes, everything but firearms and certain live animals. You name it. Amazon will sell it. "Anything," says Bezos, "with a capital A." And that's the point: Jeffrey Preston Bezos is trying to assemble

nothing less than Earth's biggest selection of goods, then put them on his website for people to find and buy. Not just physical things that you can touch, but services too, such as banking, insurance, travel.

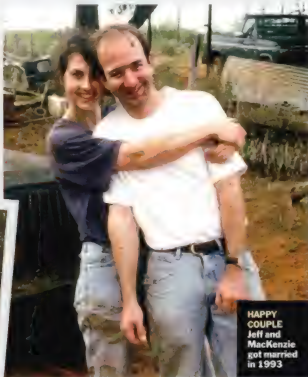
It's incredibly risky. How elastic is the Amazon brand name? How much can you stretch it until it simply explodes and becomes meaningless to consumers? And how long can the money hold out? Bezos has already burned through a bank's worth of cash with no sign of slowing down. If anything, he's upping the ante—according to estimates, the company's net loss could be \$350 million this year alone.

And the e-commerce world has changed enormously since Seattle-based Amazon jumped out to its "first-mover" advantage. There are plenty of second, third and fourth movers to battle. They come in the form of category killers that overwhelm you with selection, expertise, price and service for a given class of goods. Adornis.com is bauble central for luxury items, for instance, and Petopia.com is one of dozens of sites that will shower you and your doggie with selection. On the other side are e-malls such as Buy.com and Shopnow.com. Traditional retailers are making this



TIGER
Bezos
aimed for
physics but
vectored to
computers

**STEPPING
IN** Mike
Bezos
raised Jeff
from age
four



**HAPPY
COUPLE**
Jeff and
MacKenzie
got married
in 1993

transition to the Web too, and one of them—Wal-Mart—could be letting a monster loose when its new website debuts early next year. And don't forget eBay, the other e-commerce revolutionary. eBay's many-to-many approach to selling—the world is just one big auction—completely opposes Amazon's one-to-many, fixed-price universe. And it's been profitable from Day One.

The sheer number of competitive websites alone will put pressure on Amazon's growth—one reason Bezos is adding categories as fast as he can. During the past year, he's added video games and DVD movies, toys, electronics, software, home-improvement products, auctions and zShops—an online flea market where anyone can sell anything. Bezos says he wants to double his offerings again next year. The company also has minority stakes in other e-commerce companies such as Drugstore.com, Pets.com, HomeGrocer.com, Gear.com and Della.com, a wedding and gift registry.

But how long can you build warehouses to the sky and not fill them? Says Scott Sippelle, founding partner of the investment firm Midtown Research Group: "The chance of a painful failure goes up as they increase the chips on the table. Just look at

the metrics. As the company grows in scale, the absolute dollars it's losing are greater and greater: debt is going up, margins are going down and cash burn is increasing."

Bezos, naturally enough, is unmoved by the naysaying because he's convinced that as more customers come to his site, he'll be able to offer the lowest prices. And they will come because Amazon simply does the best job of helping them find stuff. But what if they use his site for research, then go elsewhere for the cheapest price? Bezos has considered that as well. And he has a possible solution: "Membership clubs!" he says. "If you want to see all the information we collect on Amazon—the customer reviews, the professional reviews and use our agenting technology—you have to pay \$30 a year." Those membership fees would be used to help drive down the price of items, which would be sold almost at cost. Nonmembers could shop there, of course. They just wouldn't have access to Amazon's rich data and whizzy technology.

Most of the market is betting that Bezos wins and that Amazon emerges from what will surely be massive carnage among Internet retailers over the next few years. During the past two weeks, with holiday sales

booming, Amazon's stock price has soared to \$94. The stock has split three times. Sales are expected to crest \$1 billion this year. "We firmly believe," says Salomon Smith Barney's Holly Becker, "that Wall Street will look back on these growing pains and realize management's foresight in developing one of the smartest strategies in business history."

Bezos & Co. conceived an entirely new way of thinking about the ancient art of retailing, from creating a "flow experience" that keeps customers coming back to Amazon's website to read product reviews or one another's "wish lists," to automating as much as possible a complex process that starts when you hit the patent-protected "1-Click" buy technology and ends when your purchase is delivered to your door. The Coffeyville center, for instance, is part of a nationwide distribution network specially designed to handle e-commerce. Half a dozen warehouses like it have been strategically placed in low- or no-sales-tax states around the U.S.—3 million sq. ft., at a cost of \$200 million—and are built to do what traditional warehouses can't do: deliver items directly and efficiently to customers rather than by pallet to retail stores. It requires new ways of think-

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ing about employees—and customers too.

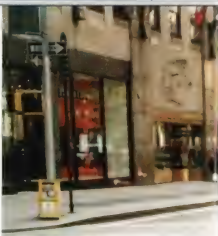
You can see it in each of the distribution centers. Here in Coffeyville, the high walls are painted white, and the endless rows of stock shelves shine in fluorescent yellow—the better to see the billboard-size banners that festoon the aisles and walls. “Our vision,” reads one, “is the world’s most customer-centric company. The place where people come to find and discover anything they might want to buy online.” Another banner floats above one of the aisles and lists the company’s Six Core Values (“customer obsession, ownership, bias for action, frugality, high hiring bar and innovation”). It’s like the Cultural Revolution meets Sam Walton. It’s dotcommunism!

The Chairman himself has been on a Long March for the past five years, and

the latest recruits: 300 employees leap to their feet as a boss on a p.a. system yells, “Let’s welcome Jeff Bezos!” They give him a standing O. “Thank you!” says Bezos. “Let me say, Thank you for working here!” And he laughs that startling laugh.

He climbs a podium and launches into his Six Core Values speech, which is the linchpin of most of his speaking engagements. He always begins with the watchword of his faith: the customer comes first. “Wake up every morning terrified—not of the competition but of our customers.”

Lots of hands shoot up during the Q.&A. period. “Bloomberg says Amazon is going to fall flat on its face,” asserts one person. Bezos dismisses the comment. “We have a ton of doubters, and the fact of the matter is, we don’t try to convince them,” he says, point-



shows no signs of tiring. Bezos is pathologically happy and infrequently enthusiastic. Today’s whistle-stop is typical. As usual he’s smiling, shaking hands and shocking new employees with his distinctive laugh, a rapid honk that sounds like a flock of Canadian geese on nitrous oxide. He’s an average-size man with thinning hair, warm brown eyes and a face that suggests Kevin Spacey with more than a hint of Frank Perdue. His uniform tends to be white or blue button-down shirts with collars that efficiently snap rather than button down. Also khakis. You get the feeling that if he wore a tie (he doesn’t), it would fly behind him like the parachute behind a dragster. Even now, as he’s supposedly being led on a tour of the warehouse, he’s at the front of the line, sailing down a narrow corridor that doglegs and decants into a huge room.

For a heartbeat, he’s surprised. Seated there, eight to a row in folding chairs, are

SIGNING BONUS
Amazon employees
often ask Bezos,
Can we have your
autograph?

ing out that he will start making a profit when the “cone of opportunity” begins to narrow—that is, when there’s no room left for more competitors to enter. The questions go on for 15

minutes. What does your house look like? (It’s lovely, and we are amazingly fortunate to live there, he replies, pointing out that until four months ago, he and MacKenzie, his wife of six years, lived in a 900-sq.-ft. apartment.) Just how many items do we sell? (Eighteen million, so far.) He answers them all, patiently and directly, without a trace of defensiveness, punctuated by the laugh. Finally, a woman in the front says, “I have two questions ... One, why the name Amazon? And two ... can I have your autograph?”

And then a surprising thing happens. The workers in the first four rows start handing up their white hardhats to be signed too. Then a group of workers behind them gets up and encircles Bezos, proffering hats, dollar bills, scraps of paper—anything—for his signature. Welcome to Bezosville, U.S.A.

FROM A TO E

Some people must be genetically predisposed to explore the frontiers. As a child, Bezos adored *Star Trek*, but it is unclear that he ever made a connection back then to his ancestors, people whose role in life was that of risk taker, exploring the unknown. The family can trace its American roots to the turn of the 19th century, when a colorful, 6-ft. 4-in. character named Colonel Robert Hall moved to San Antonio, Texas, from his home in Tennessee. A sepia-toned photo of him is framed in Bezos’ living room and shows the man wearing a bizarre outfit

Photographs by David Burnett—Contact



stitched together from dozens of different kinds of animal pelts. The settler favored that multicolored garment in later years. "When he walked down the streets of San Antonio, the crowds would part," says Jackie Bezos, Jeff's mother and the family historian.

Her great grandfather, Bernhard Vesper, acquired a 25,000-acre ranch in Cotulla, in the southern part of the state. Jeff would spend summers there with his grandparents, Lawrence Preston ("Pop") Gise and his wife Mattie Louise Strait (related to country singer George Strait).

Pop was Jeff's favorite relative. A ca-

ON THE MARCH
Bezos and crew are
on a mission to
revolutionize the
way we buy things

reer government employee, he moved his family to Albuquerque, N.M., where he headed the former Atomic Energy Commission's operations in a seven-state region before retiring to the Cotulla ranch at a relatively early age.

Jeff's mother, as smart, headstrong and pioneering as anyone in the clan, married young and gave birth to Jeff on Jan. 12, 1964, when she was 17. The marriage lasted about a year. Jeff has neither memory of nor interest in his biological father. "I've never been curious about him. The only time it comes up is in the doctor's office

when I'm asked for my medical history," he says. "I put down that I just don't know. My real father is the guy who raised me."

That guy is Mike Bezos, a Cuban refugee who moved to the U.S. by himself when he was 15 years old, with nothing more than two shirts and a pair of pants. Taken under wing by a Catholic mission, Mike learned English, toiled at many odd jobs and made his way to the University of Albuquerque. While working the night shift as a clerk at a bank, he met Jackie, who was also employed there, and fell in love. They married when Jeff was four.

Jeff was an exceptionally smart child. Fed up with sleeping in a crib, the toddler

PERSON OF THE YEAR

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HAVING A BALL.
Bezos employs a
ready sense of
humor, marked by
his frequent,
honking guffaws

found a screwdriver and reduced his jail to its component parts. He constantly built models, worked a Radio Shack electronics kit that Pop bought him down to the nubs and endlessly tinkered with stuff. When he was six, his sister Christina was born; a year later, his brother Mark arrived. When the siblings were old enough to get into Jeff's bedroom, he rigged a buzzer to his door that would go off like a burglar alarm. Later, in what his family has come to think of as the "solar-cooker era"—named after a solar microwave he concocted out of an umbrella and aluminum foil—the garage became his laboratory.

In high school in Miami—his father, an engineer with Exxon, moved the family several times—Jeff became the valetictorian. He didn't drink, do drugs or even swear. People liked him anyway. And almost every summer, he headed for his grandfather's ranch in Cotulla. It was the perfect antidote to the brainy world he inhabited the rest of the year. On the ranch he'd ride horses, brand cattle with a LAZY-G, fix windmills and tool around in a 1962 International Harvester Scout. He helped his grandpa fix a D6 Caterpillar tractor using nothing but a 3-ft.-high stack of mail-order manuals. "You have to have a lot of patience on a ranch in the middle of nowhere," he says.

If you ask him today who his heroes were, he names two: Thomas Edison and Walt Disney. The former was a brilliant innovator and a horrid businessman, the latter a good innovator and a great businessman. It wasn't Disney's movies that impressed Bezos but his theme parks. He went to Disney World six times. "The thing that always amazed me was how powerful his vision was," Bezos says. "He knew exactly what he wanted to build and teamed up with a bunch of really smart people and built it. Everyone thought it wouldn't work, and he had to persuade the banks to lend him \$400 million. But he did it."

AMAZON'S SOURCE

If you had to pick a single *eureka!* moment, a time when suddenly everything became clear about what the future had in mind for Jeff Bezos, it was on a May day in 1994. The 30-year-old was sitting at the computer in his 39th-floor office in midtown Manhattan, exploring the still immature Internet, and he found a site that purported to measure Net usage. Bezos couldn't

believe it: the Internet was growing at a rate of 2,300% a year. "It was a wake-up call," he says. "I started thinking, O.K., what kind of business opportunity might there be here?"

Thinking up business possibilities, in fact, was Bezos' job at D.E. Shaw, an unusual firm that prides itself on hiring some of the smartest people in the world and then figuring out what kind of work they might profitably do. David Shaw, a former profes-

ing much of his four years at Shaw, Bezos "was sort of an entrepreneurial odd-job kind of a person," Shaw recalled recently.

Bezos had graduated from Princeton University, majoring in electrical engineering and computer science. The field was unplanned: he had chosen Princeton for its legendary physics department. Shortly after arriving, however, he discovered that he wasn't the smartest guy in the world after all.

He felt outclassed by the physics jocks and gravitated to comp-sci.

His first job out of school was at Fitel, a start-up that was building a network to handle international financial trades. He spent about two years there, worked about the same amount of time at Bankers Trust, then got an interview at Shaw.

Actually, it was one of Shaw's partners who interviewed Bezos first and urged the boss to meet him, saying, "He's going to make someone a lot of money someday." Shaw agreed, understanding that Bezos was unusual not only for his balanced intellect—he could handle complex logic as well as articulate his thinking—but also for the overall package: smart, creative, personable, precisely the kind of person they wanted. Over time, Bezos became a specialist in researching business opportunities in insurance, software and then the booming Internet.

But how to take advantage of that online explosion? The Net had been, until 1994, a largely commerce-free zone. It was created by the Defense Department to keep its network of computers communicating in case of nuclear attack. The system then evolved into a network over which university and government researchers could exchange messages and data across most computer platforms.

The government decided to get out of the Internet business and allow private companies to step in and develop it. Bezos recalls, "I'm sitting there thinking we can be a complete first mover in e-commerce." He researched mail-order companies, figuring that things that sold well by mail would do well online. He made a list of the Top 20 mail-order products and looked for where he could create "the most value for customers." Value, in his equation, would be something customers craved: selection, say, or convenience or low prices. "Unless you could create something with a huge value proposition for the customer, it would be easier for them to do it the old way," he reasoned. And the best



IS HE TILTING AT SOMETHING? As a kid, Bezos did lots of chores on the ranch in Cotulla, Texas, such as fixing windmills.

son of computer science at Columbia University, had been wooed to Wall Street by Morgan Stanley, where he specialized in the arcane field of quantitative analysis—using computers to spot trends in the market. He formed his own company in 1988, initially to carry on that kind of work, but with so much brainpower around the office, it seemed a shame to waste it all on Wall Street. It made sense to pursue other businesses too. Dur-

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way to do that was "to do something that simply cannot be done any other way."

And that's what ultimately led to books. There weren't any huge mail-order book catalogs simply because a good catalog would contain thousands, if not millions of listings. The catalog would need to be as big as a phone book—too expensive to mail. That, of course, made it perfect for the Internet, which is the ideal container for limitless information.

Bezos needed to learn the book business fast. Fate was his handmaiden: the American Booksellers Association's annual convention was set for the very next day in Los Angeles. He flew out and spent the weekend roaming the aisles and taking a crash course in the business. Everything he learned encouraged him. The two big wholesalers for books were Ingram and Baker & Taylor. "So I went to their booths and told them I was thinking of doing this." Books, it turns out, are among the most highly databased items on the planet. The wholesalers even had CD-ROMs listing them. It seemed to Bezos as if all the stuff "had been meticulously organized so it could be put online."

Bezos realized he desperately wanted to start his own online bookstore. First he talked it over with MacKenzie. She too

LOOKING AHEAD Bezos and his wife MacKenzie believe that being effective philanthropists will be a full-time job

had graduated from Princeton, but six years after him; they met at Shaw, where she worked as a researcher. An English literature major at the university, she had been novelist Toni Morrison's assistant and now had begun a novel of her own. MacKenzie was all for the adventure.

Next Bezos went to Shaw, who said he was sorry to lose such a talented executive but fully understood Bezos' desire to strike out on his own. He cautioned him to make sure, however, that this was what he truly wanted to do. Bezos decided to spend the next two days recalculating the risks.

In his typically analytic way, Bezos cast his decision in what he calls the "regret-minimization framework." He imagined that he was 80 years old and looking back at his life. And suddenly everything became clear to him. When he was 60, he'd never regret having missed out on a six-figure Christmas bonus; he wouldn't even regret having tried to build an online business and failed. "In fact, I'd have been proud of that, proud of myself for having taken that risk and tried

to participate in that thing called the Internet that I thought was going to be such a big deal. It was like the wild, wild West, a new frontier. And I knew that if I didn't try this, I would regret it. And that would be inescapable."

Bezos figured that the average Net start-up had a 1 in 10 chance of success; he gave himself a 30% chance. "That's actually a very liberating expectation, expecting to fail," he says. That's exactly what he told his first investors—family and friends: "I think there's a 70% chance you're going to lose all your money, so don't invest unless you can afford to lose it."

"When he called and said he wanted to sell books on the Internet, we said, 'The Internet? What's that?'" remembers Mike Bezos, who initially questioned his son's sanity when he heard him say he was quitting his cushy job to start a company that would probably fail. But this was Jeff, after all, and his parents trusted him and believed in him every moment of his life. In the end, "we talked about it for two minutes," says Jackie Bezos. They ponied up \$300,000, a huge chunk of the money they had saved for retirement. "We didn't invest in Amazon," says his mother, "we invested in Jeff." The no-j-return on Jeff—was substantial. Today, as 6% owners of the company, they're billionaires.

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On July 4 weekend, Jeff and MacKenzie flew out to Fort Worth, Texas, bid goodbye to his family and headed for Seattle—a city near one of the two big book wholesalers and chockfull of the kinds of Net-savvy people he'd need to hire. MacKenzie drove a 1988 Chevy Blazer that Mike Bezos donated, while Jeff tapped out a business plan on a laptop. On that road trip West, somewhere near the Grand Canyon, Bezos called a lawyer who specialized in start-ups. What do you plan to call your company, the lawyer asked. Bezos liked the sound of *Abra-cadabra*, but the word was a little long. "So I said, 'Cadabra,'" he recalls. "Cadaver?" repeated the lawyer. A few weeks later, Bezos changed the name to Amazon Inc., after the seemingly endless South American river.

The most important person Bezos hired was probably the first: Shel Kaphan, a brilliant programmer in Santa Clara, Calif., and veteran of a dozen start-ups, many of them, in fact, failures. Bezos persuaded him, over the course of a few months, to join his company in Seattle.

His "company" was headquartered in a modest two-bedroom home that Jeff and MacKenzie rented in Bellevue, a Seattle suburb. They converted the garage into a work space and brought in three Sun workstations. Extension cords snaked from every available outlet in the house to the garage, and a black hole gaped through the ceiling—this was where a pot-bellied stove had been ripped out to make more room. To save money, Bezos went to Home Depot and bought three wooden doors. Using angle brackets and 2-by-4s, he hammered together three desks, at a cost of \$60 each. (That frugality continues at Amazon to this day; every employee sits behind a door desk.) MacKenzie agreed to work with the crew a few days a week, helping out with accounting and interviewing—the latter chore often conducted, cheekily, in a nearby Barnes & Noble.

By June 1995 a rudimentary website had been created on a hidden site (www.amazon.com:99, now defunct), and 300 friends and family members were sworn to secrecy and invited to crash-test it. "The first time I saw the site, I said to myself, 'Wow, this is it,'" recalls Shaw. It was simple, functional and wonderful. Kaphan's code was incredibly elegant and streamlined, allowing pages to be delivered without delay.

On July 16, 1995, Amazon.com opened

its site to the world. Bezos simply told all 300 beta testers to spread the word. During the first 30 days, without any press, Amazon sold books in all 50 states and 45 other countries. "Within the first few days, I knew this was going to be huge," says Bezos. "It was obvious that we were onto something much bigger than we ever dared to hope."

The company grew and grew and grew. It grew so fast that it surprised him how little he knew. "No plan survives its first encounter with reality," he says. One night, while Bezos was on his knees complaining about how sore he was from packing, he said to a co-worker, "You know what we need? Kneepads!" The employee looked at him like he was an idiot. "What we need," the co-worker said evenly, "is packing tables."

In May 1996, Amazon landed on the

technology-analysis firm, to pronounce the company "Amazon.toast." Other naysayers referred to it as "Amazon.org"—".org" being a domain name reserved for nonprofit companies. But Barnesandnoble.com did nothing to stall Amazon's amazing sales.

The stock began to move too, propelling Bezos' personal wealth into the tens of millions, then into the hundreds of millions. And then, when analyst Henry Blodgett, now with Merrill Lynch, said he believed Amazon was a \$400-a-share company, Bezos became another Rockefeller. As of last week, his shares were worth \$10.5 billion.

Ah, but money... Who cares about that? Bezos has cashed in less than \$25 million worth of his stock, but that's enough to live well on, come what may. He and his wife live in a sprawling, single-story modern home in the suburbs north of Seattle.

Bezos is beyond talking about his wealth or whether Amazon will be successful. Instead, he talks about a "nirvana" state of consumer service, in which you'll come to Amazon, and the one thing you've been looking for all your life will be featured on the page that day. You may not even know you've been looking for the thing or that it even exists, but since the site is so familiar with your consumption habits, it knows.

If the world goes his way, Bezos could become even richer than his neighbor Bill Gates. Then what? "At some point," he says, giving MacKenzie a hug as

the two of them stand around in the kitchen, "we want to figure out how to do philanthropic work that's highly leveraged. It's very easy to give away money ineffectively. But doing it well requires at least as much attention and energy as building a successful company."

He says the trick to solving some of the world's problems is to think, Amazon-like, in the long term. "Say you want to solve world hunger. If you think in terms of a five-year time frame, you get really depressed; it's an intractable problem. But if you say, well, let's see how we could solve this in 100 years—it's a problem because you'll be dead by then, but the solution becomes more tractable."

"Anyway," he adds quickly, self-deprecatingly, in probably the same way he told people his start-up had only a 30% chance of success, "it'll be a long time before we build a lasting company." And then he laughs and laughs and laughs.



THIS IS MY LIFE His days click by so fast, Bezos usually takes lots of pictures so he can remember them all

front page of the *Wall Street Journal*. The story did two things: it introduced Amazon to a whole new stream of customers, and it caught the attention of rivals like Barnes & Noble and Borders Group, which hadn't yet moved online. Barnesandnoble.com would appear a year later—just before Amazon's initial public offering, which went off at a modest \$18 a share. Never mind that the celebrated venture-capital firm Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers was its biggest institutional investor before the IPO. Wall Streeters were afraid of the threat posed by the giant Barnes & Noble, whose national network of bookstores looked unbeatable, prompting George Colony, president of Forrester Research, a prominent

HIS GREATEST FIGHT WAS FOR JUSTICE.

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THE PICKER

At the Seattle warehouse, the company's first and smallest, John Edwards fills book orders



CRUISING INSIDE AMAZON

It's like a three-ring circus that adds more rings each day

By MICHAEL KRANTZ SEATTLE

—BMVP2000

THE PHRASE SITS THERE ON THE giant monitors, and 2,000 Amazonians packing the Seattle Westin for a quarterly "all hands" meeting listen raptly while Jeff Bezos explains what it means. There are two types of businesses, he tells the troops: baby businesses, which need growth and feeding, and adult businesses, which must pay their own way. This brings him to *B, M and V*, which stand for books, music and video, Amazon's three oldest product lines. And the *P* is the news, for this trinity is nearing adulthood. "By the end of the year 2000," Bezos says, "we're going to make them profitable."

The troops are silent. Stunned. Amazon, profitable? It's autumn 1999. For years these people have been racing toward a horizon that no one, save perhaps their utopian-futurist boss, even really sees. They know much of the Silicon Valley/Wall Street/media complex believes the commodification of online retailing will lay their company to waste. Amazon the Web's golden child, darling of NASDAQ day traders who raise its market cap even faster than the company bleeds money, is also Amazon the avatar of all that may be ephemeral and fraudulent about the dotcom revolution. Now Bezos has named a date one year hence that will be the time they find out whether they're going to make it or not. A chance, after all those 16-hr. workdays, for the company actually to fail.

Their fearless leader notes their angst and offers a beneficent smile. "You can cheer," Bezos says. So the troops cheer. Imagine it. Amazon, profitable.

"I THINK WE ALL AGREE," SAYS MARA Friedman, "that a groundhog at a podium is funny."

"What's he doing at a podium?" her boss, John Mou, wonders.

"Um, he's lecturing on shadows and diffraction..."

"It's, like, a groundhog convention?"

"A groundhog convention," Friedman says, going with it. "You can't go wrong with a groundhog convention."

This Thursday afternoon the e-Cards

PERSON OF THE YEAR

Location: <http://www.jeffbezosispersonoftheyear.time.com/>

crew is sitting around a conference table, trying to make one another laugh. Today's subjects are office humor and holidays in February. A "Valentine's Day, My Ass" card for lonely hearts? Possibly. A motivational groundhog speaker? Probably. A support group for obscure Presidents? "I passed the Smoot-Hawley tariff, but do I even get a tire ad?" Absolutely.

"This is terrible," Moe warns, "but O.K.—guy in a bathrobe in a lounge chair watching TV. But he's in an office cubicle. I think Johnson is taking this casual Friday thing too far!"

Silence. Finally, someone groans.

"It's kind of *New Yorker* 10 years ago," Moe admits.

"Maybe if you put Marmaduke in there," Kirk Anderson offers.

Voice Literary Supplement. James Marcus (books) was a literary critic. Jenny Brown (video) has an M.F.A. in creative writing. Simon Leake (video) was a doctoral candidate in Renaissance studies. "I know so many people who got their Ph.D. and cannot find work," Leake says. "They're all going into business or journalism."

Or both. The editorial folks' job is to create opinionated, entertaining guides to

Amazon products: reviews, interviews, gift ideas, etc. They spend their days agonizing over, say, which obscure documentary to name the Pick of the Week and maybe only occasionally pondering the spiritual

graces her groaning shelves? Simon sighs. "I don't cover everything," she says.

"HOW OFTEN DO YOU USE AMAZON?" ASKS Phillip Van Rooyen. Maybe once a month, I say. "How do you usually get to the store?" he continues. We discuss my surfing habits while Van Rooyen noodles around a page featuring James Bond posed amid various Bond-related links like Music,



IN THE CARDS

E-greeting-card designer John Moe, ignoring the stunning view, brainstorms with Mara Friedman

"Ooh," moans Susan Benson, Amazon's editor in chief. "That was cruel."

This is ground zero of the New Economy? At age five, Earth's Biggest Bookstore is now Earth's Biggest Selection, in keeping with Bezos' plan for world domination. Meaning what, exactly? Well, in a sense, Amazon isn't about technology or even commerce. Any moron can open an online store. The trick is showing millions of customers such a good time that they come back every few days for the next 50 years. Amazon is, like every other site on the Web, a content play.

Thus e-Cards and the rest of the editorial department, a rich stew of writers, academics and other liberal-arts types. A century ago, millions of brave souls crossed the Atlantic to the land of opportunity. Now their descendants are making their own western migration, and these days many of them are landing in Seattle. Kerry Fried (books) was an editor for the *Village*

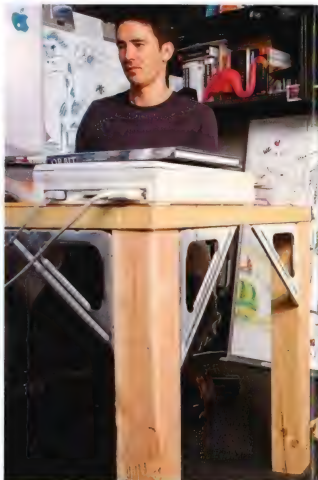
implications of this whole writing-for-a-shopping-mall gig.

"I draw a distinction between what I did then and what I do now," says Jeff Shannon, who traded freelance movie reviewing to become Amazon's DVD editor last fall. "We're free to say what we want, but we understand we're consumer advocates; just because I hated a movie doesn't mean everybody did."

So the editors perpetually balance the sacred and the profane. "Right now I'm trying to come up with gift lists," says video editor Jenny Simon. "It's a challenge trying to figure out what people will want. Ooh. *Pride and Prejudice*! That's my favorite. It's this wonderful NBC adaptation." But, hey, what about *Sturgis 1999: 300,000 Motorcyclists Take Over the Black Hills*, which also

Video and Gadgets. "What do you think will happen," he asks, his cursor alighting on Music, "if you click right here?"

What happens is I get offered multiple products spun off from one branded pop-culture image—in this case, a bunch of Bond sound tracks. Van Rooyen is part of the Amazon design team, which differs from the rest of the company in that its members use Macs, have trippy Christmas lights slung across their ceiling and are cuter than the real geeks. They spend their time thinking about what Everyman thinks



about when he visits Amazon and designing pages to meet those expectations.

It's a daunting task. For three years, defining Amazon was easy: it sold books. Then it sold books, music and videos. Now it sells toys, home-improvement products, consumer electronics and software as well. Then there are the equity stakes in startups like drugstore.com, pets.com and Gear.com, and struggling eBay-wannabe

relentless reinvestment in new markets in lieu of banking premature profits. Bezos' strategic analysis goes like this: customer acquisition is only going to get harder tomorrow, so you have to grab every customer you can today. For those 13 million customers translate into dominant market share. And dominant market share means the power, for instance, to strong-arm suppliers for better deals, which could lead to profitability.

BMVP2000.

So, since mid-1998, the company has grown from one online store to more than a dozen, and from 1,100 to more than 5,000 love-it-or-leave-it, multi-

zoo offices are scattered across Seattle: the flagship Art Deco Pacific Medical Center, the Pike Street skyscraper, the original Columbia building and so on. Stunning mountain-flanked views of Lake Washington and Puget Sound are the only luxury the spartan corporate aesthetic allows. Employees are crammed two to a bare-walled office and work at Bezos-designed desks made of old doors with legs stuck on them (design director Helen Owen bets me lunch that she will still have a door-desk in five years, even if Amazon flourishes).

"We're constantly told not to get too attached to our office," says Marcus, who has moved nine times in three years. Resettling in the suburbs might make sense, but the troops keep voting it down, clearly dreading Seattle's horrendous traffic. Instead they huddle outside PacMed in a chilly dusk



WEB MAN
Designer Phillip Van Rooyen sits at his door-desk, while Anna, a co-worker's dog, steals the photo

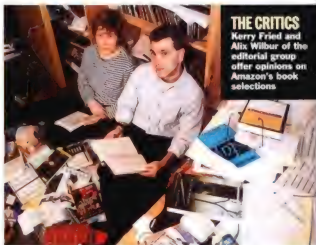
divisions: zShops and Auctions. Who are these guys now? What does Amazon represent? And will the company's more than 13 million customers stick around for power drills and wide-screen TVs? "No one's sure where all this is going," says Carrie Johnson, an analyst with Forrester Research and an Amazon optimist. "Initiatives like zShops and Auctions are distracting to the brand. They need a tab on the home page that says, OTHER CRAP."

What Johnson and other believers agree on is the wisdom of the company's

moved; the new cards aren't in yet.

Marcus, who joined Amazon in '96, recalls learning Web coding on the fly in order to get his reviews online. Kerry Fried sardonically references "my assistant" to refer to her endless clerical duties. Almost every Amazonian spends half his time each December wrapping packages and manning customer-service lines. "It doesn't matter what you've done before and what you're going to do later," says Moe. "You figure it out as you go along."

That even goes for where you sit. Ama-



THE CRITICS
Kerry Fried and Alex Wilbur of the editorial group offer opinions on Amazon's book selections

tasking nomads. Ask the average Amazon employee for his or her business card. He will stammer and pat his pockets, explaining that, well, his number changed; she has a new job title; their group just

drizzle, awaiting one of the vans that crisscross the city from one Amazon outpost to another. "Imagine how much they're paying us," a shivering woman complains, "to stand here waiting for a ride."

"WHEN I STARTED I WAS ONE OF THE FASTEST pickers here," says John Edwards. "But now that I do other jobs, some people have passed me by."

"Picking" means roaming the aisles of the Seattle distribution center, filling customer orders from shelves packed with titles arranged according to a bewildering strategy called "random stow" that leaves Toni Morrison: A Womanist Discourse abutting Garfield's Extreme Student Planner. This facility is the smallest of Amazon's nine worldwide distribution centers. But today the place is humming with hundreds of pickers pushing around carts piled high with books and other products destined to land under thousands of Christmas trees.

Location: <http://www.jeffbezosispersonoftheyear.time.com/>



FROM YOUR MOUSE TO YOUR HOUSE

What goes on behind the scenes when you place an order at Amazon.com

1 You order three items, and a computer in Seattle takes charge

A computer assigns your order—a book, a game and a digital camera—to one of Amazon's seven U.S. distribution centers, five of which it opened this year. With 3 million sq. ft., Amazon has 1.5 times the floor space of the Empire State Building.

Seattle	Grand Forks, N.D.	New Castle, Del.
93,000 sq. ft.	130,000	232,000
Farmley, Wisc.	Colleyville, Kans.	Campbellsville, Ky.
332,650	750,000	770,000
		McDonough, Ga.
		800,000

3 Your items are put into crates on moving belts

Each item goes into a large green crate that contains many customers' orders. When full, the crates ride a series of conveyor belts that winds more than 10 miles through the plant at a constant speed of 2.9 ft. per sec. The bar code on each item is

scanned 15 times, by machines and by many of the 600 full-time workers, all of whom get Amazon stock options.



4 All three items converge in a chute, and then inside a box

All of the crates arrive at a central point where bar codes are matched with order numbers to determine who gets what. Your three items end up in a 3-ft.-wide chute—one of several thousand—and are placed into a cardboard box with a new bar code that identifies your order.



5 Any gifts you've chosen are wrapped by hand

Amazon trains an elite group of gift wrappers to "make it look like Mom's." Each worker processes 30 packages an hour (those who fail are reassigned to other jobs). For its busiest season yet, Amazon's warehouses are stocked with 4.4 million yards of ribbon and 7.8 million sq. ft. of wrapping paper—which if laid flat would more than cover Disneyland.

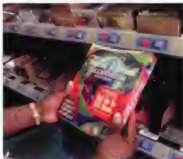


6 The box is packed, taped, weighed and labeled before leaving the warehouse in a truck

The McDonough plant was designed to ship as many as 200,000 pieces a day. About 60% of orders are shipped via the U.S. Postal Service; nearly everything else goes through United Parcel Service. Both have large facilities within 10 miles of the warehouse. Products that are unusually big or heavy (150 lbs. or more) require special delivery.

2 In suburban Atlanta, three red lights go on

Your order is transmitted to the closest facility that has the products. Amazon's newest, in McDonough, Ga., opened in October and stocks more than a million items. Rows of red lights show which products are ordered. Workers move from bulb to bulb, retrieving an item from the shelf above and pressing a button that resets the light. Computers determine which workers go where.



7 Your order arrives at your doorstep

Voilà! One to seven days later, yet another of Amazon's 13 million customers has been served.

—By Joe Zeff



This is how Amazon's other half lives. At least 40% of the work force labors in a distribution center or customer-service center. It's the blue-collar work of the Internet. Neon hair, body piercings and non-Caucasian skin tones are generously represented. And so is the Amazon work ethic. "You have to prove yourself," says Edwards, 30, who came here from a print shop. "But once they notice that you're on time, hardworking and consistent, good things happen. Some people are really motivated," he says, as a head-phonned airhead ambles by. "Others aren't motivated at all. And they usually don't last long."

Sky-high expectations pervade a company that's growing so fast that entire meetings revolve around how to phone-screen the countless job applicants; recently more than 400 people applied for four openings. "I had five interviews with five people on two different days, and this was for a temp job," says an ex-employee. Amazon detractors are easy to find. The company, like any growing society, has developed a caste system that embitters some in the lower orders. "I hated working there," says the ex-employee. "I was totally underutilized. My bosses were bad managers who just happened to sign on earlier than I did. There was this arrogance, like, 'I'm employee No. 117, and I'm going to be a multimillionaire, so do what I say.'"

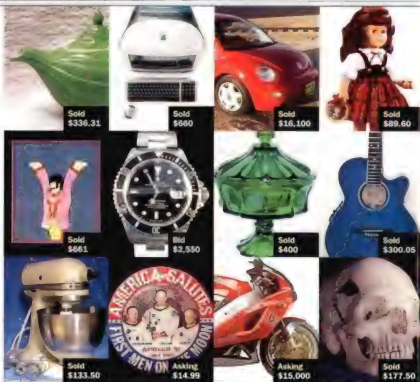
Yes, the money. Oh, to be one of the Amazon anointed, those who signed on early and are enjoying multimillion-dollar payouts. You hear about Gen Xers turned philanthropists: the woman who signed up out of college and plans to retire at 30; the guy who launched a dog-biscuit business on the side. "We get told not to watch the ticker," says Marcus, a three-year vet who, one imagines, does so anyway.

Rewards like money make it easy for most Amazonians to embrace the company's hyperyouthful, workaholic Weltanschauung. "Everybody's always talking about books, music, videos, computers," says Moe. "And everybody works really, really hard. It's that exhaustion-exhilaration feeling you had in college in finals week. But here, it's 24/7."

They go to movie screenings and rave about their fierce broomball rivalry. They throw Friday-night keggers, Valentine's Day parties and masquerade balls. Last fall's Halloween party was so huge that PacMed security guys were checking IDs at the door. WELCOME CAMPUS RECRUITS reads one note scrawled on an elevator whiteboard, summing up the prevailing spirit. AMAZON UBER ALLES!

Location: <http://www.theauctionuniverseofebay.time.com/>

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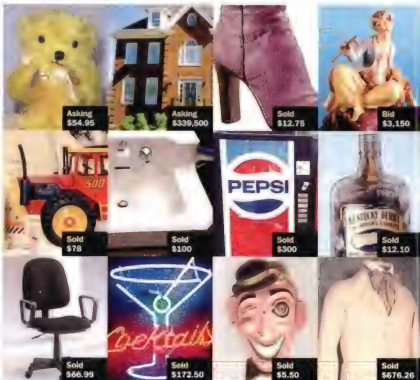


>> FROM YESTERYEAR'S TREASURES TO YESTERDAY'S GARBAGE, THERE'S

By ADAM COHEN SAN JOSE

WHEN SHARON BALKOWITZ sold antiques from a stall in Bismarck, N.D., she was a victim of geography. There were few buyers in her hometown of 54,000, and prices were low. She started putting her wares up for auction on eBay last year and suddenly found herself part of the global marketplace. An Art Deco ashtray she bought for \$20 was bid up quickly—and sold for \$290. A vase she got for \$5 went to a California buyer—for \$555. She even sold an old tractor online—for \$2,300, to a priest from New York. Checks have been pouring in from as far away as Iceland, Egypt and China. “The top month I ever had in the stall I sold 15 items,” she says. “Now I can sell 15 items in an hour.”

Welcome to the eBay revolution. Auction sites are one of the hottest corners of cyberspace right now. Online bidders are eagerly competing for new ovens (ubid.com) and used microscopes (going-going-sold.com). There are service auctions, where lawyers can underbid one another for assignments to register patents (elance.com), and reverse auctions, where buyers





S A PLACE AND A PRICE FOR EVERYTHING. WHAT ARE YOU COLLECTING?



THE YEAR OF E-TAILING

Location: <http://www.theauctionuniverseofebay.time.com/>



eBOSS CEO
Whitman
brought
adult
supervision
to eBay

name their own price for a ticket to Hawaii and airlines decide if they will go that low (*priceline.com*). There are niche auctions for vintage surfboards (*webworldinc.com/vintage*) and movie memorabilia (*auction.neoline.com*), express auctions that wrap up in an hour (*onsale.com*) and auction sites where the proceeds go to charity (*webcharity.com*).

For an industry that's all of four years old, the dollar amounts are staggering: \$4.5 billion in sales this year, and an estimated \$15.5 billion by 2001. eBay is the dominant player in the online-auction world, with 7.7 million registered users bidding on some 3 million items. But other Internet heavyweights are hard at work trying to break off some of the market for themselves. Amazon.com added an auction site last spring. (It appears to be starting slowly: as of October, eBay had more than five times as many visitors as Amazon.com's auction site). Yahoo, the most visited site on the Web, introduced its own auctions last year. (Yahoo's big selling point: listing items is free.) And in September, Microsoft, Dell Computer and more than 100 other companies announced that they're

"wring out the inefficiencies in the supply-chain process," says FairMarket CEO Scott Randall. They also benefit from Metcalfe's Law (named after Robert Metcalfe, the founder of 3Com Corp.): the value of a network increases by the square of the number of people on it. Every time a conventional online retailer adds a new user, it's just one more person who can buy its products. But every time eBay adds a new user, he can buy from or sell to any of the 7.7 million people already on the network. A retailer, in other words, is one to many, while eBay is many to many.

Online auctions have their limits. Auctions are most useful for setting the price of goods of indeterminate value. (Some of the earliest ones were held by Roman soldiers selling off battle loot.) Auctions make more sense for items whose worth is uncertain (an antique chair or a used forklift) than for commonly sold goods (a new pair of name-brand blue jeans).

But online auctions are shaking up the way America does business. People are quitting their day jobs and finding they can support themselves entirely by selling on eBay and other auc-

trade with in the San Francisco Bay Area. Omidyar was already an e-commerce pioneer (Microsoft eventually bought out eShop, a company he co-founded), but lately he had been wrestling with how the Internet could be used to create fairer markets. The Pez dilemma led Omidyar to the flash of an idea: an Internet auction site to function as the ultimate efficient market.

Omidyar wrote some code and over Labor Day weekend of 1995 launched what he called AuctionWeb, which was supported on the \$30-a-month Internet service provider he was hooked up to from home. (The site's domain name was *www.ebay.com*, and eBay was the name that stuck.) There were no Pez dispensers—that came later—but there were listings for a whole lot of computer hardware. eBay started out free, but it quickly attracted so much traffic that Omidyar's Internet service upped his monthly bill to \$250. Now that it was costing him real money, Omidyar decided to start charging. He concocted a fee scale similar to the one eBay uses today: a nominal fee for listing an item (10¢ back then, as little as 25¢ now) and a percent of the final sale price.

The payments that arrived with Omidyar's daily mail were small—in some cases dimes and nickels taped to index cards. But those little payments were to end in piles.



>> THE FEEDBACK EBAYERS POST IS OVERWHELMINGLY POSITIVE

linking their websites—and their 46 million users—in a new auction consortium run by FairMarket, a company that creates and runs online auction sites.

Industrial players are also getting in on the online-auction craze, driving down the cost of equipment by bidding to buy it directly from suppliers. There are business-to-business sites for construction equipment (*ironmall.com*) and for farm machinery like cotton pickers (*farmbid.com*). Bulk quantities of latex paint are up for auction at *paintandcoatings.com*, and *pulpandpaperonline.com* has basket centrifuges.

Global auctions are the kind of ideal market Adam Smith could only have dreamed of. Sellers are, at least in theory, guaranteed a price that isn't too low: they get to sell to the highest bidder anywhere in the world. And buyers are assured the price isn't too high because they get to choose the lowest one being offered by any seller in the world. Location becomes unimportant. You're not penalized for being a seller stuck in low-traffic, low-price Bismarck or a buyer shopping in high-cost Manhattan. Auctions also minimize transaction costs ("friction" in e-commerce-speak) and eliminate the need to operate bricks-and-mortar stores. Online auctions

sites. Traditional retailers are significantly augmenting their revenue by selling on eBay, and some are shutting down their stores entirely. Businesses that piggyback onto online auctions—insurers, shippers, escrow services—are booming. Offline businesses that compete with eBay—from antiques stores to classified-ad sections—are bracing for trouble.

Some of the impact will be more profound. Online auctions may destabilize the notion of a fixed price, leading buyers and sellers in all kinds of transactions to negotiate more over what items should cost. And they are likely to further erode the economic barriers between nations, speeding the way to a single world market. The full effects of eBay's hyperefficient, banish-the-middleman revolution haven't yet been felt, but one thing is clear: the pre-Internet model of buying and selling is going, going ...

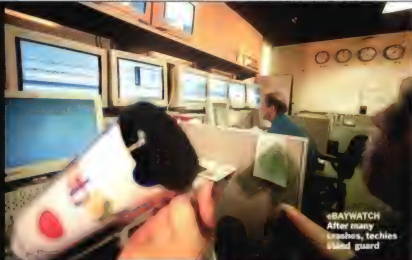
IT ALL BEGAN WITH PEZ AND A MAN NAMED Pierre Omidyar, now 32. In the summer of 1995 Omidyar's fiancé (now wife) Pam, who collected Pez dispensers, was bemoaning how hard it was to find other people to



eBay took in \$1,000 the first month, more than it cost to run. Omidyar really knew he was onto something when he put up a listing for a broken \$30 laser pointer that he was about to throw out. He fully disclosed that it didn't work—even with new batteries—and started it at \$1. Inexplicably, a bidding war ensued, and someone ended up taking it off his hands for \$14. Meanwhile, the site's revenues kept doubling: they were \$2,500 the second month, then \$5,000, then \$10,000. Omidyar eventually had another insight: "I said O.K., I've got a hobby that's making me more money than my day job," he recalls. "So it might be time to quit the day job."

As eBay's only full-time employee, Omidyar soon found himself thrust into a new and unwanted role: grievance officer. Buyers and sellers with complaints about each other were e-mailing him personally and asking him to step in. Omidyar urged them to work things out amicably between themselves. But if eBayers really had to gripe, he decided, they should do it publicly on the site. "I wanted to reinforce the notion that if you're going to bring a complaint about someone, do it out in the

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eBAYWATCH
After many
bashes, techies
stand guard

open," says Omidyar. "You can't come running to Daddy." He had one other proviso: if traders are going to complain about people they don't like, they should be willing to say something nice about people they do.

That was the genesis of the Feedback Forum, one of eBay's most distinctive and popular features. Omidyar kicked it off with a Founder's Letter in February 1996 in which he laid out a philosophy that still

guides eBay: that people are basically good, that they make mistakes, and that they should be given the benefit of the doubt. "I was afraid it would turn into just a gripe forum, but as I watched it develop, I was amazed to realize that people enjoy giving praise." In fact the feedback eBayers posted about one another was overwhelmingly positive.

Within a few months, Omidyar was

ready to take eBay up a notch. He brought in a partner with the business background he lacked: Jeff Skoll, a friend and Stanford M.B.A., then working in e-commerce for Knight Ridder. Together they began to bring in more employees—techies, customer-support staff, finance people. In those early days, eBay—operating then as now out of a bland San Jose, Calif., office park—was a goofily informal place to work. Décor ran to Star Wars figures and giant papier-mâché Pez dispensers, a wedding gift when Pierre and Pam tied the knot. The first employees had to assemble their own desks, and everyone sat on fold-up bench chairs. Work ground to a halt at 3 p.m. for Nerf soccer games.

By 1997 Omidyar had lined up a venture-capital firm (Benchmark Capital, whose initial \$6.5 million investment is now worth some \$4 billion). eBay hired a marketing consultant to come up with the company's catchy, multicolored logo and confronted (and later defeated) threats from two new auction sites backed by well-funded big companies: Onsale and Auction Universe.

eBay had a first choice for its new

COFFEE WITH PIERRE

Creating a Web Community Made Him Singularly Rich

IT WAS A SCENE FROM A BAD spy novel. There I was leaning against a kiosk on the Champs Elysées, furtively looking at a small black-and-white photo and trying to spot the elusive Pierre, an Internet legend who tries to stay out of the spotlight. I surveyed the tables at Fouquet's, the fashionable outdoor café where we had agreed to meet. No dice. How hard can it be to pick out a geek entrepreneur who's worth more than \$5 billion?

When Pierre spotted me—the reporter's notebook was the tip-off—it was clear why I was drawing blanks. He looked nothing like the old photo I had dug up. He had abandoned his Internet-guru getup—the gawky glasses, the long ponytail—and now looked like any

other well-dressed, thirtysomething Parisian. No car and driver. No p.r. entourage.

After creating one of the Net's top brands, a company with a market value of some \$20 billion, Pierre Omidyar hit the delete key. Months before eBay's IPO—the traditional media coronation for a Silicon Valley wunderkind—he stepped aside in favor of onetime Hasbro exec Meg Whitman. "I've obviously tried to push her to the forefront," he says. "Meg's the public face of the company." Omidyar moved to France in part to get in touch with his roots—he was born in Paris and lived there until he was six. But he's also working on eBay's expansion plans, making regular visits to the company's London and Berlin offices to give advice

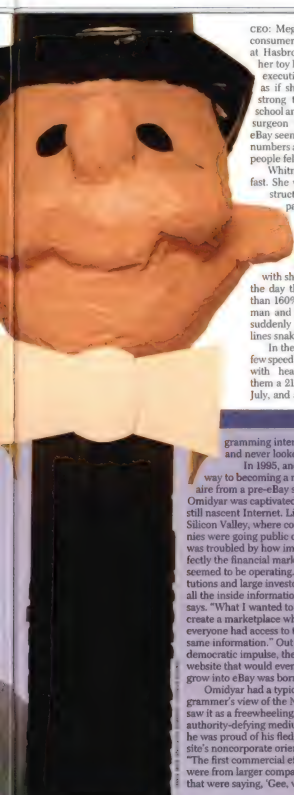
and plot strategy.

Yet even 5,600 miles from eBay's San Jose headquarters, he remains the quiet guiding spirit behind the company. Over a few coffees, he set out his personal philosophy—libertarian, communitarian and a bit New Ager. It's a world view that's evident in eBay's headquarters and throughout what Omidyar likes to call the "eBay experience."

In the great Silicon Valley divide between techies and money people, Omidyar admits, he's a classic technovork. A computer buff in high school and a computer-science major at Tufts University, he fit all the stereotypes. "I was the typical nerd or geek," he says. "I forget which one is the good one now." After his junior year, he moved to the San Francisco Bay Area for a pro-

ONE FOR ALL Omidyar just wanted to level the playing field a bit





CEO: Meg Whitman, who had honed her consumer-marketing and managerial skills at Hasbro (Mr. Potato Head was one of her toy lines) and worked as a marketing executive at Disney. At first it didn't look as if she was going to come. She had strong ties to the East Coast—kids in school and a husband who was a top brain surgeon at Massachusetts General—and eBay seemed like a lark. But looking at the numbers and getting a sense of the passion people felt for eBay, she was hooked.

Whitman started imposing discipline fast. She whipped the finances and infrastructure into shape and got the company ready to go public. Within months of her arrival in early 1998, she was leading an eBay team on a road show to win over investors. On Sept. 24, 1998, the initial public offering took place,

with shares offered at \$18; by the end of the day the price had bounded up more than 160%, to \$47. Omidyar, Skoll, Whitman and the rest of the eBay staff were suddenly rich. Back at the office, conga lines snaked through the hallways.

In the year since the IPO, eBay has hit a few speed bumps. The site has been plagued with headline-grabbing crashes, among them a 21-hr. outage in June, four more in July, and a 10-hr. shutdown in August that

sent eBay stock plunging 10%. The stakes were higher than ever because the eBay staff was well aware that thousands of individuals outside the company—single mothers, disabled people, seniors—were supporting themselves by selling on eBay. "It was probably the single most stressful time we've had at eBay," says Skoll of the August crash. "Poor Meg would catch an hour's sleep on a cot and then have to face the TV cameras." There have also been occasional embarrassments (and some probable hoaxes) that the press—and late-night talk-show hosts—have had fun with: the seller who put a kidney up for sale (the bidding was up to \$5.7 million before eBay called it off); listings for a bazooka and other military weapons (also yanked). And, of course, the 17-year-old boy who put his virginity up for auction.

Still, today eBay is one of the most dazzling sites on the Internet. Log on and feast your eyes on a global garage sale that includes—well, just about any inanimate object you've ever seen, heard of or lusted after. That *Partridge Family* lunch box that made you feel like the Man in third grade? The bidding starts at \$5. That Art Deco clock you always wanted? There were recently 19 of them being auctioned on eBay. Sure there's kitsch (Elvis snow globes, anyone?), and a scary number of Beanie Babies. But there's also luxe (usually a few

gramming internship and never looked back.

In 1995, and on his way to becoming a millionaire from a pre-eBay start-up, Omidyar was captivated by the still nascent Internet. Living in Silicon Valley, where companies were going public daily, he was troubled by how imperfectly the financial markets seemed to be operating. "Institutions and large investors had all the inside information," he says. "What I wanted to do was create a marketplace where everyone had access to the same information." Out of this democratic impulse, the clunky website that would eventually grow into eBay was born.

Omidyar had a typical programmer's view of the Net. He saw it as a free-wheeling, authority-defying medium, and he was proud of his fledgling site's noncorporate orientation. "The first commercial efforts were from larger companies that were saying, 'Gee, we can

use the Internet to sell stuff to people,'" he says. "Clearly, if you're coming from a democratic, libertarian point of view, having corporations just cram more products down people's throats doesn't seem like a lot of fun. I really wanted to give the individual the power to be a producer as well." eBay has hewed closely to this vision. It emphasizes community, and it doesn't run advertisements.

Omidyar says he tried to imbue eBay with a "founding culture" based on the moral principles he absorbed in childhood. "My mother always taught me to treat other people the way I want to be treated and to have respect for other people," he says. "Those are just good basic values to have in a crowded world." As it happened, there were also good business reasons to carry the Golden Rule into cyberspace. Unlike traditional e-tailors, who can control the consumer's experience, eBay is almost com-

pletely dependent on how users interact. "We really have to encourage our customers to treat each other well," Omidyar says. "You can't tell people to do that. You have to encourage them to adopt a certain set of values."

Omidyar seems to realize that given his anticorporate values, it's more than a little ironic that he's one of the richest human beings on the planet. And clearly he's uncomfortable with his wealth. "What one person needs, and what one family needs and all of their future generations need is a tiny, tiny fraction of this total number," he says of his net worth. "That means we have an awesome responsibility to see that the wealth is put to good use." In addition to eBay's foundation, Omidyar and his wife are developing one of their own. He says he wants it to advance the same values as eBay: "Empowering people and helping them be the best they can be." —A.C.

Rolls-Royces are going at any given moment). Poke around and you'll come across the impressively old (dinosaur teeth!), the bizarrely new (who really needs to bid on last month's *TV Guide*?) and the just plain weird (anyone for a metal BEWARE OF ATTACK RATS sign?). And you will find thriving subcultures that collect things you didn't know anyone bothered to collect. Really, people: antique waffle irons?

eBay is also one of the Internet's greatest financial success stories. It has defied the 11th Commandment: Internet Start-Ups Shall Bleed Red Ink. It's made money from its first month of operation. After only four years, eBay is worth some \$20 billion—more than Sears and J.C. Penney combined—and its stock price has surged 25-fold. The rewards for the key players have been lavish. Whitman, after less than two years at the company, controls shares worth about \$1 billion. Skoll's net worth is more than \$3 billion. Omidyar's 30% ownership adds up to more than \$5 billion.

Why has eBay succeeded so wildly? A big factor is that eBay was first on the block, locking in buyers and sellers

antiques and collectibles shows, which aggregate items like eBay does, but less efficiently. Joe Spotts, president of L&S Management, owns two shows—one in Denver, the other in Kansas City, Mo.—and he says the number of vendors at both has slid 30% in the past 18 months. And eBay is the reason. "It has the potential of absolutely destroying the business," says Spotts. "I've seen several shows around the country that are near shutting down." Flea markets could be the next to suffer. When the National Flea Market Association held its annual meeting in Orlando, Fla., in October, 100 members jammed into a session on the Internet future to hear dire predictions of what the Net would do to their land-based businesses.

Classified ads—and the newspapers that heavily rely on them for revenue—are also vulnerable. An eBay listing is cheaper; there's no limit on length; you can include a photo; and it reaches far more people than any newspaper.

Flea-market aficionados insist that eBay is doing a more abstract kind of damage: it's destroying the pleasures of the offline collectibles world.



Along with the acquisition of Butterfield & Butterfield, the world's fourth largest auction house, Great Collections marks a move by eBay into the high-end market. (The average sale on eBay is currently about \$40.) eBay has also begun rolling out local eBays, starting with eBay Los Angeles. The idea is to provide a local market for big items like cars and furniture that can't easily be shipped long distances and for location-specific items like concert tickets.

eBay's most ambitious undertaking right now is its drive to go international. It's a big enough priority that Omidyar has returned to his native France to help oversee the effort. eBay has always had a small percentage of overseas users logging into its U.S. site, but now it is aggressively moving into foreign markets. In June it purchased Alando.de—Germany's equivalent of eBay—and folded it into the eBay site. The company also has sites running for the U.K., Canada and Australia. eBay is far ahead in those countries but vulnerable in places where it is less well known—and where one of its rivals could take hold first. "The battle grounds are France, Italy and Japan—the biggest prize, the second largest Internet market in the world," says Whitman.

It's not just a push for market share.

>> THAT PARTRIDGE FAMILY LUNCH BOX? BIDDING STARTS AT \$5

early. The more people flocked to eBay, the more it became the place to be. But the real genius of eBay is its success in building a community—"maybe the most real community on the entire Web," says Whitman. There's no question people like hanging out in eBayland. The site gets more than 1.5 billion page visits a month. And at a time when the Internet mantra is "stickiness"—how long users stay on a website—eBay is cyberspace superglue. Each visitor to Amazon.com spends an average of 13 min. a month on the site. On eBay, each visitor's monthly average is about 1 hr. 45 min.

eBay—and the online-auction phenomenon it has spawned—is redrawing America's business landscape. There's scarcely a company in America that won't be affected by the new rules of commercial engagement. "Every week someone will come up to you and say this has changed my business entirely, and you can fill in the blank for what business," says eBay vice president of marketing and business development Steve Westly. "A guy came up to me at the National Auctioneers Association and said, 'I'm in the bull-sen business, and eBay's completely changed the access I have to bull semen.'"

But not everyone is going to win in the new eBay economy. Hardest hit so far are

Al Hoff, author of *Thrift Score* and collector of "everything but Levolor blinds," says eBay has changed the atmosphere in flea markets and thrift stores. She now comes across entrepreneurs who are trolling the aisles looking for items they can resell for a higher price online. "The code of ethics used to be that you bought things for yourself,"

she notes. And she objects that eBay's efficiency is making it harder for bargain hunters like herself. A friend recently tried to buy a Pink Floyd eight-track tape on eBay—and watched as it sold for \$227. Time was, Hoff says, when you could find eight-track tapes selling for a quarter at thrift shops. "Now everything goes for the highest price anyone in the world is willing to pay for it," she says. Hoff is worried that online auctions may ultimately spell the end of flea markets and thrift shops, and that an important slice of Americana will be lost.

eBay is sticking with its core mission of consumer-to-consumer auctions but is also working to expand its reach dramatically. In October, eBay announced a new venture: eBay Great Collections, a new area on the site for antiques and fine collectibles.



Omidyar and his colleagues are still driven by the company's original goal of creating a global market where everyone competes on an equal footing. One pet project is an effort to bring a Guatemalan village into the global economy by hooking it up to eBay. Consumers in the developed world could buy local handicrafts at lower prices, and eliminating layers of middlemen would allow villagers to keep more of the purchase price for themselves.

The global online marketplace will be here before we know it, and eBay's refrain "eBay everywhere" seems destined to become a reality. It's something the National Flea Market Association members are starting to accept. Several members of the association have begun moving online, working to put together virtual-flea-market sites like Fleamarket.com. And even diehard thrift-shop mavens are becoming reconciled to the fact that the future belongs to eBay. "You can't stop the wheels from turning," sighs Hoff. "In fact, I have to confess: I just bought something on eBay this morning." —With reporting by

Michael Krantz/San Francisco



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THE YEAR OF E-TAILING

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AUCTION NATION

Town square, community center, social scene—eBay turned into much more than an auction

By ANDREW FERGUSON

MELISSA WICKER LIKES TO SHOP for her friends. And she has a lot of friends—nearly 8 million, at last count. Of course, the word friend is used loosely these days, in an era when e-mail establishes instant intimacy between total strangers separated by thousands of miles. So it's no surprise that Wicker, 46, an assistant district attorney in Isle of Palms, S.C., hasn't met many of her new friends in the flesh. But they're on her mind when she cruises clothing stores and comes upon a tantalizing markdown in designer duds. She buys by the armful, goes home to her computer and within a couple of days has set up her own fashion show—on eBay, in full view of anyone with a modem and a yen to bid on the clothes she puts up for auction. Bids race through cyberspace, winners are declared, and Wicker mails the goods to the lucky buyers—and cashes their money orders and cashier's checks, sometimes for a tidy profit and always with the thrill of a successful sale. "I've been waiting for eBay my whole life," she says.

And she has lots of company, among buyers and sellers alike. eBay makes a lot of people happy, and not just because it makes some people rich. The surprise—in more enthusiastic moments, you might even call it the miracle—of eBay is that it offers online consumers something rarer, more essential, more enduring than a chance to make a profit.

"Community" is an overworked term, too often applied artificially to any motley of people who share a skin color, an income level or a set of political bugaboos. But from the limitless ether of cyberspace, eBay has managed to conjure up the real thing. For many people, eBay does what communities have traditionally done. It not merely provides them financial sustenance but also draws them together with like-minded folk, offering encouragement, rewarding unique talents and interests, giving an outlet for their eccentricities and individuality and in some cases rescuing them from the margins where they would otherwise languish alone.

Consider Carol Sangster of Edmonton, Canada, who seven years ago had to quit her job as an engineering clerk at Canadian National Railways because she was struggling with systemic lupus and diabetes. For several years, she fought for her life. In time she partially recovered. "I became well enough to be bored," she says. Then, 18 months ago, she discovered eBay.

In their travels over the years, she and her husband had acquired acres of stuff. She started posting lots of it for auction. When she was well enough,

Since its launch on Labor Day 1995, eBay.com has listed more than 126 million auctions

The eBay.com community includes 7.7 million registered users, who buy and sell items in more than 2,900 categories

Each day, eBay.com is host to more than 2.5 million auctions, with more than 350,000 new items going on sale every 24 hours

SOLD! ON EACH OTHER Mary Ellen and Don Millbraeth met via eBay and married

Location: <http://www.theauctionuniverseofebay.time.com/>



NET DIFFERENCE
Shop owner David James needed a warehouse for his eBay business

she began attending public auctions and buying up lots. Today she tests her strength, challenging herself with eBay, working as much as her illness allows. "For me," she says, "it wasn't the sale. It was being part of something again. It was the contact with people. I guess I used it to make me feel better."

Many antiques dealers, who would seem most threatened by eBay, have seen their livelihoods transformed. David James, for example, opened his shop in Alexandria, Va., eight years ago. He deals mostly in what the trade calls smalls: candlesticks, glassware and other such collectibles. He's still got the store, but today

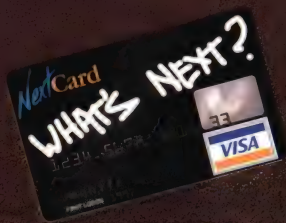
his business—and his life—revolve around a warehouse a few miles away, where he stores the treasures he has gleaned from scouting estate sales and flea markets. From a cramped, windowless cubicle, he monitors the hundreds of auctions he has posted—moving anywhere from \$40,000 to \$75,000 a month. He has hired a full-time employee to oversee his eBay business and plans to move to a new space complete with a miniprocessing center.

For as long as there has been an Internet, of course, there have been anti-Internet fuddy-duddies, pessimists who lament the end of face-to-face sociability as people retreat from the bustling public square to their

computers for the anonymous encounters of cyberspace. With some justification, the pessimists can trace the decline of shopping, that most social of activities, from the mom-and-pop corner shop, where everyone knows everyone else, to the department store, where we might recognize one of the cashiers, and from there to the vast warehouse of the superstore, where no one knows anyone—and finally to the Internet, where human contact is reduced to the pulsing of electrons.

But the evidence suggests that eBay represents a return to that earlier one-on-one sociability—and maybe even improves on it, since the Net collapses the traditional

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divisions of geography and class. Wherever you plant your modem, the fabled new economy arrives—even in the boonies, as Patricia Hoyt calls her hometown of Baker, Mont., roughly 225 miles from the nearest big city, Billings. The old economy of oil and cattle has not been kind to Baker, and when oil prices dropped, business dried up at the motel Hoyt and her husband own.

But Hoyt had a hobby: making decorative glass beads. Thanks to eBay, her hobby is now her livelihood. She sells as many as 3,000 beads a month, for as much as \$50 each. eBay has given her more than a new career. She refers without irony to the bead community she has discovered online. Glass beads have spawned an entire network of chat groups and e-mail lists. Many of her customers buy weekly. "If I don't put up any auctions for a week," she says, "they'll write me and ask, 'Are you O.K.?'"

The community angle is one that eBay executives work hard to promote. Users find electronic newsletters catering to their obsessive interests, visit chat rooms where buyers and sellers can get acquainted and swap tips, drop in at a café where they can catch up on the latest community news. Everywhere you turn—or click—you find the chipper, boosterish tone of a small-town newspaper—that is, a small-town paper with almost 8 million writers and readers.

Before bemoaning the atomization of American society by eBay and the Internet at large, the worrywarts should talk to Mary Ellen and Don Millbranth. Last year they were strangers, both widowed. Don, 66, a retired engineer, in Wanatah, Ind., decided to sell a paperback book about miniature cabinets, his new hobby, on eBay. Mary Ellen, 61, bought it for \$7.10 (including shipping). One thing led to another, as tends to happen on the Internet. After a particularly passionate weekend of e-mail (more than 200 in 48 hours, by Mary Ellen's count), they decided to meet in Mary Ellen's hometown of Huntsville, Ala. It was, needless to say, Valentine's Day. They were married three months later. Ever alert to a public relations coup, the corporate honchos at eBay flew the happy couple to California for a honeymoon. "I never felt such a part of something," says Mary Ellen.

The Millbranth's may be an extreme example of eBay's social benefits. A few marriages for every 8 million customers don't exactly qualify eBay as a lonely hearts club. But those few underscore what pessimists

miss—in many important respects, the eBay phenomenon is a sign of a fundamentally healthy society. The sociologist James Coleman coined the term "social capital" to describe the shared values and habits that allow individuals to cooperate for a common purpose. Without it, societies collapse.

Given the anonymity of the Internet, eBay places its customers in a risky arrangement, something akin to asking strangers to

eBayers are trustworthy. Chris Spencer, a show-business manager in Southern California who lists as many as 3,000 items monthly, says eBay confirms for him the essential goodness of human nature. "The average person is honest and decent," he says. "That's what eBay is about—honesty. I have cashed thousands of checks and have had just one bounce."

There's another bit of American folk wisdom that eBay also incorporates: trust everyone, but cut the cards. eBay offers free insurance in case a transaction goes awry, as well as escrow accounts that for a small fee hold the money until a deal is completed. More important, eBay's ingenious feedback system encourages buyers and sellers to post evaluations of one another. In the real world, the reputation of a seller—whether a used-car dealer or a plumber—can be hard to measure. In the virtual world, all reputations are transparent.

Moreover, eBay has exposed America as a nation of collectors. Matchbook covers, cast-iron witches' cauldrons, Pez dispensers, pneumatic grease pumps from the 1920s, Three Stooges memorabilia—you name it, some American somewhere collects it. "We define ourselves by our stuff," says Robert Thompson, president of the Popular Culture Association and a Syracuse University professor who specializes in the study of collectibles. In a democracy, with everyone theoretically equal, people want to be different. We don't have a caste system; we've never had a blood-line aristocracy. We've distinguished ourselves by our cars, by the clothes we wear, by the stuff we buy and sell. "I suppose you can lament all the consumerist tendencies in this, the materialism," says Thompson. "But it gives so much joy to so many people. It's an innocent way of providing a lot of fun."

And fun, of course, is at the heart of the matter. Surely the Internet could be put to darker purposes. We may not live at the end of history, but we live in a country, and increasingly a world, where the large preoccupations of earlier generations have been resolved. We need no longer worry about subsistence, about food

and shelter. For centuries philosophers have contemplated just this moment and wondered what would come next. For a very large number of people, it appears the answer is, eBay comes next.

We could do worse. —Reported by Sally B. Donnelly/Washington and Mitch Frank/New York



N.D. TO N.Y.
Dakotan Sharon
Balkowitsch
sells far beyond
her small
hometown



CRYSTAL CLEAR
Californian Chris
Spencer's hobby
has pulled in
over \$200,000
in one year

meet in a dark alley to exchange goods. Trust is the essential element of social capital, and eBay cannot operate without the assumption that your buyer or seller is basically a decent sort. Fraud on eBay is remarkably rare: eBay's figures show fewer than 1% of transactions have involved fraud. Even accounting for underreporting, this suggests that

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CLICKS **AND** BRICKS

E-tailers don't own the world yet. In fact, the real winners may have real stores too

By KARL TARO GREENFELD

THINK OF EVERY BABY TAP-A-TUNE PIANO OR Makeup Pretty Angelica picked by the yellow-capped pickers, packed by the blue-hatted packers and loaded by the gray-brimmed loaders at this 100,000-sq.-ft. eToys warehouse in Commerce, Calif., as another round fired in the retail-vs.-e-tail battle. Christmas is always war in the toy industry, and nowhere more so this year than online, where pure e-tailers like eToys are for the first time fighting on several fronts.

Attacking from the Internet is Amazon.com, the Web superstore that began selling toys this summer and plans to do to eToys what it did to CDnow in the online music business—knock it out of the top spot. Attacking from the street as well as from cyberspace are the classic “bricks-and-mortar” retailers Toys “R” Us and KB Toys, which were written off as Net players after the last holiday season but this year have developed online offshoots.

Photo-illustration by Clark Mitchell—Studio 212



A black and white photograph of a man in a tuxedo standing in front of a Volvo car with its door open. The man is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The car is a dark color, and the background is a plain, light-colored wall.

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In the parlance of the Web, Toys "R" Us and KB Toys are "clicks-and-mortar" businesses, combining their retail stores with online versions. Retail observers and investors are watching this holiday season closely for clues as to which type of operation is better positioned to serve customers and make a profit in the 21st century—the eToys model, which operates online only, or the Toys "R" Us version, with which old-fashioned chains are finally forging a Web presence.

Plenty of reasons suggest that e-tail will crush retail. Take selection. There are the infinite miles of infinite shelf space that Amazon's Jeff Bezos loves to chuck about. And there's no need to set up those costly stores, with rent and utility bills due every month and a sales force to handle those pesky customers.

Instead, there is a cyberstore that never closes and is more likely to have what you desire in stock because of that infinite shelf space and the millions of square feet of cheap warehouse real estate in Utah or Nevada. "The pure Internet play don't have nearly the infrastructure cost that off-line plays do," says Mike May, an analyst at Jupiter Communications, an e-commerce research firm in New York City. "A single point of sale can be used to reach an entire country or the entire world." As Jay Herratti, president of Boo.com North America, a sportswear e-tailer, put it, "We could be global from Day One."

Economists get dizzy thinking about this. It is all so scalable. Add a few servers, a dozen more Web pages, a couple more customer-service reps, run your traffic up another digit, expand into new product lines and sell a hundred thousand more books or CDs or power tools. This kind of growth—Internet gurus like David Wetherell, enthralled by the mathematics of community, call it viral growth—defies conventional val-

uation and makes the usual measure of retailing—same-store sales, sales per square foot—seem like roman numerals or the abacus, relics of another age.

Certainly, off-line merchants did their best to get rid of us. We've been going to the same malls with the same stores for a generation now, sipping Orange Jubuses as we wade past the Limited on the way to the food court. If you were cool, if you "got it," you shopped online: It was convenient, it was competitively priced, it was fun. Web retailers like Amazon could even engage the intellect, making recommendations and offering a venue for shared literary criticism. When was the last time a salesclerk offered that kind of guidance? "People are more and more fed up with the kind of service they get in the big stores," says Connie Keithahn, an office manager in St. Paul, Minn. "Online it's really amazing how much better the service is." How threatened do mall owners feel? Last month the Saint Louis Galleria briefly ordered its tenants stores to remove advertisements for their online counterparts, arguing that rents were calculated as a percentage of in-store sales.

Given that kind of willing audience, e-tailing start-ups emerged in virtually every "space." There are at least nine sites for pets, 17 for toys, six selling luxury goods and about two dozen peddling computers. Jewelry. Beef. Sex toys. Anything you can buy in the mall—and quite a few things you



MARKET CAPS
eToys had a two-year head start on perfecting its delivery system

NEW GAME
Toysrus.com's Barbour and team revived online sales

can't—is available online, shipped to your door within days, if not hours.

Investors clearly think the game is over, rewarding pure-play e-tailers with market capitalizations that dwarf their off-line competitors—Amazon's \$32 billion, vs. Sears' and K Mart's combined \$17 billion; eToys' \$4.5 billion, vs. Toys "R" Us' \$3.6 billion; and, even more amazing, airline-ticket broker Priceline.com's \$8.3 billion, vs. the combined \$8.6 billion market cap of Continental Airlines, US Airways and United Airlines.

All of this may persuade you that old-fashioned commerce is as dead as disco. Unless, of course, you've been to a mall lately, where the parking lot is packed and you can spend a vacation day in line to pay

A BIG HIT IN THEIR INDUSTRY

LAST YEAR MANY BRICKS-AND-MORTAR RETAILERS FEARED SELLING ONLINE WOULD EAT INTO STORE SALES. THIS YEAR THEY'RE MAKING UP FOR LOST TIME—AND GIVING THE PURE PLAYS A HARD FIGHT.

Figures indicate average daily unique visitors for week ending Dec. 5, 1999
Indicates clicks-and-mortar companies



TOYS

1. eToys.com	384,000
2. Toysrus.com	314,000
3. Kikids.com	237,000

The eToys site knocked 'em dead last year, but now it's virtually neck and neck with Toysrus, proving the power of an established off-line brand



BOOKS & MUSIC

1. Amazon.com	1,262,000
2. Cdnnow.com	307,000
3. Barnesandnoble.com	282,000

Jeff Bezos' branchchild still rules this universe, but don't be misled: Barnes & Noble's e-store is the sixth most popular shopping site overall



APPAREL

1. Eddiebauer.com	77,000
2. Landsend.com	73,000
3. Victoriassecret.com	59,000

Catalogs, already set up for direct-to-consumer delivery, have had an easier time going online. Ironically, catalog sales growth has been uneven



for a shirt. Malls still offer plenty of advantages. You can touch, compare and try on the merchandise—important for items like shoes. And, of course, you can buy it today. We still love instant gratification.

The counterattack is well under way and gathering momentum. Traditional merchants have taken heart from, of all places, Charles Schwab, which has broken

down the walls between its off-line brokerage business (with 335 retail locations) and Schwab.com, its online business. Schwab had to be spy enough to devise cross-channel pricing for stock trades; allow account access via the Web, telephone and in person; and create advertising that speaks to the Web savvy as well as the Net illiterate. The result: over the past two years,

Schwab has emerged as the best-positioned retail brokerage, with more than \$628 billion in customer assets (\$264 billion of which is managed online), vs. \$23 billion and \$29 billion for Web-only brokers Ameritrade and Etrade.

Now that Schwab has proved that the clicks-and-mortar strategy works, this Christmas season we are seeing that Schwab may be the precursor rather than the exception. Robert Kenzer, CEO of Kenzer Corp., a retail executive-search firm, says retailers will have to do online, off-line and catalog in order to survive "or have strategic alliances that permit them to do all three." Companies such as Circuit City and eToys' competitors KB Toys and Toys "R" Us are proving they're not out of the game. "Clicks-and-mortar has a lot of inherent advantages," says Seema Williams, e-commerce analyst at Forrester Research. "For one thing, an existing, powerful brand presence. It's going to be awful tough for an online retailer to maintain its lead once the clicks-and-mortar people get their act together."

Initially, companies with powerful off-line brands had a difficult time overcoming the notion that they would be cannibalizing their core business if they sold through the Web. But as it became clear that e-commerce was a viable and complementary retail channel—albeit one that requires a new skill set—the big off-line players gradually came around to embracing it.

Toys "R" Us was at first regarded as an industry joke, its website plagued by overcrowding and inadequate order fulfillment. KBKids.com didn't even exist last year. The space belonged to eToys, the first online retailer to design a truly kid-friendly toy site. Kids could create electronic wish lists, gifts came wrapped, batteries came included. "I saw immediately that here was a channel that could revolutionize how you serve the toy market," says eToys CEO Toby Lenk.



1. Etrade.com	185,000
2. Schwab.com	126,000
3. Ameritrade.com	67,000

Clicks-and-mortar pioneer Charles Schwab's customer assets dwarf those of its pure-play competitors, but look who's running the busiest site



1. Compaq.com	155,000
2. Beyond.com	131,000
3. Apple.com	116,000

Do you really need to touch or smell that PC you're buying? Didn't think so. Computer products were among the first to be sold online.



1. JCPenney.com	154,000
2. Sears.com	95,000
3. Wal-Mart.com	94,000

Today Wal-Mart's a Web weakling, but rivals should not rest easy. With a new alliance with AOL, and a site redesign set to debut, Wal-Mart is Y2K ready



1. Discoveryhealth.com	68,000
2. Planetrx.com	53,000
3. Mothernature.com	52,000

Online prescription sales face insurance restrictions; "wellness" sites (vitamins, herbs) are more popular

Lenk, who started eToys in 1996, pioneered a tricky business. No one else was selling toys online at the volume Lenk envisioned. "There's nothing that's easy," Lenk says. "The details are really hard." Everything—the software, the shipping procedures, the wrapping system—had to be invented on the fly, including the ingenious idea of streamlining the warehouse process by having pickers, packers, loaders, replenishers and order processors all wear different-colored hats. Lenk discovered the hard way that e-businesses couldn't simply duplicate existing retail operations, such as catalog companies, online. "You can't take the mail-order model and plug and play here. For example, we need real-time inventory control. We need the website integrated with the back end, so a customer knows if we have an item or not."

For the off-line toy retailers, that kind of problem solving was intimidating enough to keep them on the sidelines during the holiday season, caroling that the Web was just a passing phase. As late as last year, Robert Nakasone, then Toys "R" Us CEO, was more eager to talk about store redesign than Web strategy. Toys "R" Us has had problems with its stores too.

But last Christmas, eToys proved you could sell Barbies and Brio trains on the Web, doing \$20 million in sales and capturing more than 50% of the online toy biz. So this year off-line players had no choice but to go cyber and—surprise, surprise—they've been up to the task. Toys "R" Us, the bumbling, old-economy slow mover, has in the past two quarters come on like light sabers in the toy space, setting up a subsidiary, Toysrus.com, and prepping that company to go public sometime next year.

This is not the Toys "R" Us of dingy stores, clogged inventory channels and checkout lines extending back to the diaper section. This is a sleek e-commerce start-up staffed by twentysomethings packing the same sort of techno-firepower as their feverish fellow travelers over at Amazon or eToys. They're here to change the world. New CEO John Barbour, 40, a chunky, jovial Scotsman who came over from Hasbro, may not be an old Net hand, but he certainly comes across as agile enough to play with the Web boys.

The two-pronged Toys "R" Us has several potential advantages over the e-gang. "Look, the pure plays certainly under-

stand and leverage the Net faster and better than the bricks-and-mortar guys," says Barbour, who made his name at Hasbro with the Koosh ball, a plush ball toy. "But customers are finding they like the convenience of being able to walk down to the local Toys "R" Us and exchange a toy." Most toys are gift purchases—an aunt buying a Furby for a faraway nephew, a grandmother choosing from a confusing array of Pokémon for her grandkids—and there is a high likelihood of the wrong pick. "If you're a kid, what do you want to do? Pack a box and stand in line at the post

managers to take returned items bought on the Web and even to direct customers to the Web for items not in the store. Toysrus.com has set up a separate fulfillment arm at a 500,000-sq.-ft. warehouse in Memphis, Tenn., to handle online orders.

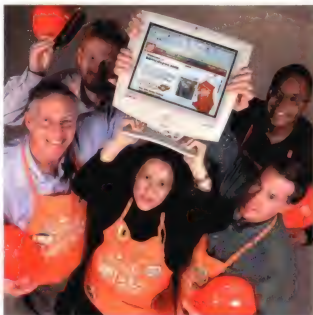
At the corporate level, the company had to offer off-line execs a share of the beefy stock options being extended to the hotshot managers of the Toysrus.com spin-off. It's expensive, but setting Toysrus.com up as a potential public offering allowed Barbour to lure the kind of top-tier Net employees who work for equity, not just salary.

While eToys remains the most efficient seller in this space, Toys "R" Us is closing the gap and has already proved to be a winner with shoppers, attracting more visitors than eToys during the last three weeks of November, according to Net-tracking firm Media Metrix. The site had its share of bugs, however. A tenfold increase in traffic following the release of its annual *Big Book* catalog crippled the site for several days. (The company says it has since added servers to increase transaction capacity.) Nonetheless, Toys "R" Us and fellow clicks-and-mortar player KB Toys are putting enough shoulder behind their online brands to make them e-players.

One year ago, the wisdom went, a bricks-and-mortar retailer couldn't afford not to be online. Today the case can be

made that an online retailer might be well served by a multichannel approach that includes actual, physical stores. Retailers, like Williams-Sonoma, that have gone virtual are finding that old-fashioned stores are an efficient advertising medium. "Storefronts are as much a branding vehicle and advertising tool as billboards," says Bonnie Kramer Tonnison, an analyst at Hambrecht & Quist.

The "big box" retailers are on the move too. Last week discounter K Mart cast a wider net to snare online customers, teaming with Yahoo to launch a free Internet service and e-commerce site called BlueLight.com. Wal-Mart announced a similar partnership with America Online (see following story). Also, Microsoft and Best Buy last week announced a deal to promote each other's Web offerings—MSN Internet service from Best Buy stores, BestBuy.com from MSN's Web pages. Home Depot will start



SLOW BUILD Next spring Home Depot will start filling Web orders from local stores, a few markets at a time

office or go down to Toys "R" Us and pick out a new toy?" asks Barbour. As a father, Barbour knows what's mission critical here—a new toy ASAP.

Barbour is convinced that online toy space, like off-line, is more about having the hot toys than about having every toy. That's where a big brother can come in handy. With the buying muscle of the conventional Toys "R" Us behind it, cyber sibling Toysrus.com stands a better chance of "coaxing" a few extra pallets of hot toys like Harley-Davidson Barbies from the manufacturer.

Although Toys "R" Us is now two companies, customers expect a seamless relationship, and this has forced some adjustments. Barbour had to persuade store



@hope

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Location: <http://thebiggestretailerinamerica.time.com/>

selling lumber and cement from its website next spring, using local stores to fill online orders—a strategy, Tonneson says, that will give customers the most flexibility. The downside: rollout will be market by market, so it could be years before the company is a national e-tailer.

It sounds tediously old economy—very pre-Internet—but when it comes to building brand awareness, it's tough to beat the plain old walk-in store. "We're still a nation of tire kickers," says International Council of Shopping Centers spokesman Malachy Kavanagh. For every \$1 spent online, \$37 is spent off. That ratio is changing quickly, but where would you rather be today? Off-line shopping generally is having a banner year, with forecasters predicting a record shopping season: \$184 billion in total consumer spending during the last two months of the year, an estimated 6.5% increase over the same period last year.



UNMASKED
Gazoontite.com found the value of opening an actual store

At least one e-tailer has cashed in on this off-line gold rush. CEO Soon-Chart Yu of health-products site Gazoontite.com—he calls it the "breathe happy" site—has opened an actual shop in San Francisco to sell blankets, air purifiers and other products for asthma and allergy sufferers. Yu says having a bricks-and-mortar location lowers the website's customer-acquisition cost to one-fifth of what it costs virtually. Television and billboard ads are expensive. With a store, a customer walks in and acquires himself. Yu may be the first Internet entrepreneur to discover the side-walk; if his experience is any indication, he won't be the last.

There is one confusing by-product of the off-line store. "When we were planning it, we hoped it would break even," Yu recalls. "But it's actually profitable." Yu may have discovered the secret to steering his e-commerce company into the black: build a store.

—With reporting by Maryanne Murray Buechner/New York and Marc Houquet/St. Paul

Waiting for Wal-Mart

Coming in Y2K: a brand-new website and a deal with AOL

IT'S NOT TOUGH TO SEE WHY 100 MILLION customers shop at Wal-Mart every week. The nation's top retailer sells everything from sweatpants to string beans, rakes to Ritalin. It keeps its prices low, its shelves stocked and its big, wide aisles peppered with blue-smocked clerks. The company will ring up about \$160 billion in domestic sales by year's end, with profits on track to top \$5 billion. With that kind of scratch—and a proven knack for giving people what they want—the House That Sam Built seems a shoo-in for success in cyberspace.

So why is Wal-Mart's website so crummy? Product selection has improved recently, but it's still puny. The design is underwhelming; search and navigation tools are weak. And don't try returning something bought online to a store. "It's the biggest toy seller in the country, and its toy site is terrible," says Forrester Research analyst David Cooperstein.

Do not be fooled. Wal-Mart's website may be a disappointment now, but many suspect it's just the soup before the soufflé—served to tide customers over while the company cooks up something better. Wal-Mart is doing what it has always done, notes DLJ analyst Gary Balter: watching, learning and biding its time before swooping in for the kill. "By no means should anyone assume that Wal-Mart's not going to be a major, major player in the longer term on the Internet," Balter says, "because it will be."

The first strike is planned for New Year's Day, when Wal-Mart has said it will launch a redesign of the site, adding photo and travel services and expanding the menu to 600,000 items (superstores typically stock about 100,000). The company also promises to link the site to its 2,485 stores in 50 states, allowing online pur-

chases to be returned off-line. "We'll even refund the shipping charges," says Glenn Habern, Wal-Mart's Web war chief.

The changes move Wal-Mart closer to the "clicks-and-mortar" approach to e-tailing. But Balter isn't expecting a watershed event. The company will improve its online operations, he says, "at a pace it feels it needs to go at to win—and it usually wins." Wal-Mart's loyal demographic—mainstream folks, not tech geeks—will be sidling up to spanking-new, sub-\$500 PCs from Santa just as the new-and-improved *wal-mart.com* is making its debut. So Wal-Mart just might be their ride to the party.

Mighty America Online just signed up to help pass out the punch. Last week Wal-Mart and AOL confirmed plans to launch a co-branded, low-cost Internet service by next spring. In-store kiosks will help introduce shopping at *wal-mart.com*—and probably the new ISP—to the yet-untapped market strolling Wal-Mart's aisles.

Wal-Mart does face some chal-

lenges. It's the leading logistics company in the world, but it is not set up for shipping directly to consumers, an essential link in the e-commerce chain. To fill the gap, Wal-Mart has contracted Books-A-Million and Fingerhut to pick, pack and ship online orders—most likely a short-term solution. The company will also have to grasp how online shoppers shop. Choosing products to splash on its home page isn't like stocking razor blades by the check-out. "This is where it's behind the learning curve," Cooperstein says, "but it will learn." And before long, it may be time to dig into that soufflé. Priced at a discount, of course. —By Maryanne Murray Buechner





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IBM Net.commerce software helped eSeeds grow from 200 gardening products to 10,000 in six months.

IBM

Web-Free Shopping

Forget your PC. Let your TV, smart fridge or land blimp make the deal for you

By CHRIS TAYLOR

ATENTION, E-COMMERCE SHOPPERS: your days of being tied to the PC for your product needs may soon be over. In the near future, currently being envisaged by engineers, you'll go shopping via PalmPilot, via TV with cable-modem hookup, via game machine, via intelligent refrigerator—via any means, it seems, other than a good old-fashioned desktop and keyboard.

A new kind of consumer is about to emerge as the Internet revolution spills over the edges of the computer revolution's territory. "The next wave is people who never wanted to buy a PC," says Barry Parr, an analyst at International Data Corp. Even as early as 2003, analysts expect, a third of online households will be spending around \$50 billion through non-PC devices.

Many of them won't even have to open a Web browser to go shopping. Internet-ready cell phones already have e-commerce capabilities. Sony's latest terminal for WebTV offers split-screen shopping, so you can buy Christmas gifts without taking your eyes off the tube. Excite@Home's broadband cable service will launch an undertaking next year that lets you instantaneously buy the products you see advertised. Say you're watching a Pizza Hut ad when an animated stuffed-crust pizza floats across the screen; two clicks of the remote, and it's heading to your door. Excite@Home already knows your credit-card details and address. Just sit back and wait for the calories.

The slightly more active may prefer to use bar-code scanners, which a company called Symbol Technologies is embedding into Palm handheld computers. Here's the idea: simply scan the unique 12-digit bar code of each product in your kitchen as you use it, and a replacement is on its way. If you prefer to stay in the La-Z-Boy, munching on pizza, get your refrigerator to order the groceries. Electrolux and Frigidaire have al-

ready developed prototype smart fridges, which, we're promised, will automatically sense when your milk carton feels light or your cheese smells like unlaundered socks and will order more. In the wake of the smart fridge, food-industry experts are dreaming of a smart garbage can—we kid you not—that will read bar codes on stuff you throw away and notify the store—which would also be a major incentive for bachelors to keep their pads tidy.

Pie in the sky, you say? Yes, pie and pie squared. Just wait till you hear about land blimps. As more and more sites promise faster and faster deliveries (check out urbanfetch.com or kosmo.com, which delivers videos, ice cream and best-selling novels to your door in under an hour in five cities), experts expect the arrival of what Paul Saffo of the Institute for the Future calls "convenience stores on wheels," vehicles on a permanent cruise between warehouses and your garage.

Not that an interstate full of delivery trucks will spell the death of your mall. "People will go shopping in stores as a social activity," predicts high-tech guru Esther Dyson, but "there may be a lot of showrooms and fewer places where you actually take things home." Should you buy off-line, automatic in-store bar-code scanning may make checkout lines a thing of the past.

And if you really don't want to walk away from your PC, the Web will still be there. Watch for more gee-whiz applications to draw you into retail websites, like the virtual dressing rooms at eddiebauer.com and boo.com, or furniture.com's floor-plan program.

Watch also for increasingly intelligent shopping agents—like the DealAgent at dealtime.com—to create ever more complex offers for those shoppers who are really into bargain hunting. The DealAgent lets merchants look at minute-by-minute snapshots of how much users are willing to pay for a certain product—say, \$400 for a Panasonic 27-in. TV—and change prices accordingly.

If all that makes your head spin, don't worry. You won't have to deal with shopping agents; you won't have to deal with the Web at all. Stay on the couch, watch the commercials, order stuff with your remote. Bottom line: future shopping is going to be as simple and convenient as you want it. Your fridge will handle the rest.

—With reporting by Owen Thomas





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IBM

Location: <http://www.thenextbigbattle.time.com/>



Food Fight! Food Fight!

Grocery-delivery sites are hungry for your business

By CHRIS TAYLOR

HIGH SHELVES AND HORRIBLE MUZAK. Aisles littered with squashed grapes and spilled cornflakes. And those gosh-darned carts that never steer straight. Yep, for most of us, the experience of grocery shopping still ranks somewhere between having a tooth pulled and changing a diaper.

But not for Liz Stone, a 33-year-old mother of two in Evanston, Ill., who pointed her mouse at Peapod.com a year ago and never looked back. "It has changed my life," she says. "Instead of running into a store with a kid under each arm, trying desperately to avoid a meltdown, buying 20 things I didn't want, I've got the time to think about what I need. It's made me a better shopper."

So why are so many of us stuck with cascading cans of soup and a two-year-old's tantrum in Aisle 6? The fact is, online supermarket shopping is in its infancy, and most of the \$440 billion we spend annually filling the pantry goes to traditional grocers. Naturally, they are less than enthusiastic about giving that business up. "We're going to fight for every food dollar," says Michael Sansolo of the Food Marketing Institute, which represents the grocery establishment.

Indeed, supermarket retailers are fighting back with their own Net groceries that emphasize name-brand trustworthiness. Take Maine-based Hannaford Bros., which owns Shop 'n' Save stores across the Eastern U.S. Hannaford set up HomeRuns.com, which has upped the ante by offering a double-your-money satisfaction guarantee. It's already doing brisk business in the Boston

area. That's no mean feat. Boston is a nasty little incubator of Web grocers and boasts four firms in cutthroat competition; one company, Streamline, will pay to install a fridge in your garage, allowing the Web store to make unattended deliveries.

Currently, though, Beantown is the exception. Even Peapod, the oldest and most widespread Web grocer, is available to only 8% of the U.S. population. "It's taken quite a while," admits Peapod CEO and president Bill Molloy. "Early on, people felt they didn't deserve this service yet. How could they tell their parents they didn't want to go to the store?"

This long national nightmare of grocery guilt seems to be ending. Molloy thinks we will see a coast-to-coast Web-grocer conglomerate within four years, though he hesitates to say if it's going to be his company, which took a \$9.4 million loss last quarter.

Picking a winner in this market is a tough call, in part because each pioneering

e-grocer has a different idea about what kind of goods you want and when you want them. At the basic end of the scale, Netgrocer.com wants to send you nonperishables like cereal or juice in a FedEx box sometime in the next four days. At the other, San Francisco-based Webvan will bring you hideously perishable stuff like ice cream and iceberg lettuce within a 30-min. window.

These companies don't always manage it, but you've got to give them points for effort. Webvan boasts that its 330,000-sq.-ft. warehouse is so meticulously organized that no packer has to walk more than 19% ft. in search of a product. Now, post-ipo, the firm is set to build 26 warehouses across the country at a cost of \$1 billion.

Not every webhead is working against the established grocers. Priceline.com, the site that lets you name your price for airline tickets, is doing the same for groceries in Manhattan and Philadelphia; it expects to go national by next May. The catch: you still have to push a squeaky wheel around terrazzo flooring and pick up the items yourself. Savings kick in only at the register.

Priceline founder Jay Walker says his biggest customers are seniors, college students and parents with small children, who have the impetus to navigate the bidding process for the average \$12.75 it will save them on a basket of 10 items. "For some families," he says, "that's the difference between putting meat on the table once a week and three times a week."

But most Web grocers sniff at the Walker model. Their customers are so in love with delivery, they don't even miss manhandling the fruit and vegetables. "I never knew what I was sniffing for in a cantaloupe anyway," says Molloy. Liz Stone concurs. These days, she only sets foot in a regular grocery store about once a month, for the odd item she forgot. "When we do go now, it's like a treat for the kids," she says. Children who actually enjoy supermarket shopping? The wonders of e-commerce will never cease. ■

THE PLAYERS



TRADITIONAL

Real-world supermarkets have profit margins of about 1%; they're also hoping to muscle in on the Internet grocery-delivery business



ONLINE

Sites such as Peapod, Streamline and Webvan hope their swift, lean warehouse operations will yield profit margins of 12%



@unearth

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Location: <http://www.partyonline.time.com/>



FOOD SURFING
Carlson found that the Net is neat, but an 800 number is also handy

UNBUNDLED
Internet foods are packed to survive minor earthquakes, or clumsy handling

A DINNER @ MARGA

Having 30 for supper? Let the Internet stock your pantry (just don't count on having goose)

By MARGARET CARLSON

WHAT A DELICIOUS ASSIGNMENT: invite 12 people to dinner at my Washington house, come up with any menu I want, hire someone to serve and clean up, and charge the whole feast to the company. I could hear the Champagne corks popping.

There were a few hitches. Everything had to come from the Internet, no going to the store, and I would have to write about it. There's no such thing as a free dinner.

Immediately, I e-mailed an invitation to our local Internet hero, America Online CEO Steve Case. A reply came by phone: Would we mind faxing the information?

Not at all, but if Mr. You've Got Mail regresses to old tech, can e-commerce really be that easy? With Case onboard, and TIME's Person of the Year issue to dangle before guests, I pursued a Noah's Ark theory of who else to invite: two members of Congress, two teachers, two candlestick makers. I warned everyone they would be TIME's guinea pigs. But when you're having Alan Greenspan to dinner, you realize the repercussions of a dyspeptic entrée. Who wants to serve the meal that ends the longest economic expansion in peacetime history?

With the party set for Sunday night, the plan was to give myself a week to order, always starting online but resorting to 800 numbers in a pinch, find a middle ground

between ordering the totally exotic (alligator meat) and the reliably prosaic (ham), and default to vendors in California when in doubt, figuring those geeks in Silicon Valley surely have figured out how to stuff a turkey through a modem.

First things first: I needed a new salt shaker (more than one coffee drinker had got a nasty surprise spooning salt out of the makeshift bowl I keep it in) and a tablecloth that actually fit. I ordered both from Williams-Sonoma (williams-sonoma.com). This is where I first felt Screen Rage, a risk at many sites. This arises after you've just filled in every last scrap of personal data, except your shoe size and SAT scores, and the screen freezes on you. Don't think that Mr. Internet has saved anything for you. (If God is a woman, then the Web is a man, silent and indifferent, with a short attention span.) You have to start over. And over.

Getting great coffee was a comparative



**HAVING A
BYTE** Some
capital
denizens
dig into the
Net feast

MARGARET'S

breeze. I went directly to the sources—a Hawaiian plantation, cornwellcoffee.com, for Kona, and to bluemountaincoffee.com for Jamaica's Blue Mountain beans. This is also when I became a Coffee Bore. At most sites it's easier to get in than to get out, since Webmasters tend to fill all the space available, which online is infinite. Did you know that Kona beans thrive in the dark volcanic soil, sunny mornings and cloudy afternoons of Hawaii? I didn't either, but now I've brought it up at three parties. I've turned into the kind of person I used to avoid.

For real food I thought holiday season and went hunting for a goose. At goose.com I found I could acquire a rifle for the purpose—it's an outdoors store. This is when I fell in love with Jeeves, the fictional British butler who helped Bertie Wooster put his pants on one leg at a time, reincarnated in cyberspace as a cheerful search engine that sorts through all the others at AskJeeves

(ask.com). As in life, you need a friend of whom you can ask anything: What is love? What's the GDP of Monaco? Where can I buy a goose? The easily distracted might choose to go elsewhere, for there are no nonstop flights at AskJeeves. The whimsical Jeeves wended up Mother Goose, along with the chance to hear one (a nasal honk right out of your laptop) and a recipe (Remove stray pinfeathers. Place orange rind and celery leaves under the loosened skin. Truss). That was enough goose for me.

The encyclopedic Jeeves brought me to goose liver, which led me to foie gras, which took me finally to France Gourmet Traditions (gourmet-tradition.com), a quintessential Parisian grocer that had precisely what I wanted. Jean-Marc Donce could get the foie gras to me on time—if I were in the Paris bureau. At its site a Strasbourg charcuterie posted this bad news: "Cannot at this time ship. USDA does not return our calls." Funny, I have that very same problem with government agencies.

A few more clicks, and I found the same pâté at GreatFood.com, which I ordered, along with mustards and cheese. It's a luxurious site with Hollywood-studio visuals. You can't touch, smell or squeeze the merchandise on the Web, so pictures, however

doctored, are essential. It was at GreatFood that I met temptation in the form of dinner for 24 at the click of a mouse. But the meat worked out to about \$40 a pound and... it would have been wrong.

GreatFood had a link to Omaha Steaks (omahasteaks.com), which I'd seen advertised but never tried. There was a scrumptious picture of beef Wellington—very festive, very holiday, very Savoy Hotel—with a bonus gift of six 4-oz. sirloins. Maybe there is such a thing as a free dinner, after all.

I went to Napa Valley at the eponymous Wine.com (what luck to nail down that name), proved I was 21 and ordered better wine than I'd ever served. Since I was already in California anyway, I called up Patisserie Lambert (patisserielambert.com), where I'd eaten in real time—I mean, real life. It's a small shop, remarkably cybersophisticated, with visuals so good you could almost smell the madeleines. And there it was, the cake of my dreams, Chocolate Fantasia, three layers of chocolate caramel mousse cake with ladyfinger biscuits soaked in espresso. A dramatic dessert can redeem many a main-course sin, so I went for it. But Lambert quickly replied that a three-tiered cake was too dicey to ship. Then send the layers sep-

arately, I said. Some assembly required? No problem. Then came word that this was actually a wedding cake. Hey, pal, no problem. I'll have someone get married. One of these government officials will preside—captain of the ship, quick ceremony, that type of thing. Just send the cake.

No go. I settled for two separate cakes with raspberry sauce on top. In a marvel of packaging, considering their delicacy, they arrived intact. Just to amortize the FedEx charges, I threw in a couple of tomato tarts. Major cost lesson: it's not the food, it's the shipping that kills you.

There is no grocery website that delivers to my ZIP code, so fresh vegetables are hard to come by—thank goodness. I find the very sight of raw broccoli and cauliflower on a buffet table dispiriting. I don't go to parties looking to balance my diet with the four major food groups or to consume the recommended daily allowance of fiber. For my own soiree, I hit Cajun Joey's Specialty Foods (cajun-joey.com), where sugar is the fifth major food group. Joey hasn't met a vegetable that can't be mashed, pureed, creamed or souffléed—Beechnut meets Le Cirque. The carrots, corn, spinach and artichokes looked great and ended up tasting like candy. I was thrilled.

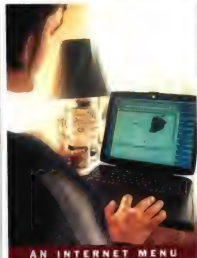
I can't pinpoint just when the task of foraging for food on the Web finally began to overwhelm me. It might have been when I found out that because of the law in Washington, the wine would take at least ten days for delivery. But wait... fast delivery was possible to West Virginia. The political columnist in me wanted to know why: the power of Senator Robert Byrd? Some anomaly in the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms? But the Martha Stewart in me just wanted the wine. A round trip to West Virginia would take more time than I had left, yet I needed a case of Merlot to ensure that my guests were less than keenly sensitive to the cellophane and cardboard from which their meal had so recently been liberated. I needed a way around the Rules. What if I could find a local store with a website but faxed the order? My seven years covering the Clintons were coming in handy. How do I get a case of wine to my doorstep by Saturday? Don't ask, don't tell.

The trouble didn't necessarily end with delivery. When I sampled the beef Wellington, although remarkably juicy and delicious, I realized it wasn't going to slice cleanly into pieces suitable for lap dining (fearful everyone would be busy during Washington's party-gridlock season, I had let the guest list swell to an sno crowd of 30). I was worried enough to e-mail my editors in New York City: How about a back-up ham, that mainstay of

Irish funerals? "Boring," they replied.

But not as boring as going hungry. Dinner by committee was my worst idea yet. Through Jeeves, I reached the Smithfield Collection (smithfield-companies.com/collection), and despite the pretentious name for a company that slaughters pigs, I got delivery of a crusty, honey-soaked ham in an ice chest left under the porch, per my instructions, in one day's time.

At this point, I realized I needed a real-



AN INTERNET MENU

AT YOUR SERVICE: Sort of. If you really need it tomorrow, go to the store

Foie Gras	\$28.50
www.GreatFood.com	
Ambur Smithfield Ham	\$66
www.smithfield-companies.com	
Gabrielle Tablecloth	\$35.99
www.williams-sonoma.com	
Bacon Kissed Carrots	\$6.50
www.cajun-joey.com	
1997 Shafer Merlot	\$35
www.Wlne.com	
Gâteau au Chocolat Framboise	\$34
www.patisserieiambert.com	

life Jeeves. Who better to serve food with smootiness sufficient to obscure its Internet provenance? Ironically, my virtual Jeeves couldn't produce a human one. He did tell me of a school in the Netherlands where I could "learn the true art of butling." Smarty pants. I located a domestic agency in Beverly Hills on my own, but its best price for a footman in a morning coat was \$500, minimum. In a panic, I had our bureau administrator, Judith Stoler, call the caterer she uses for TIME functions, which, by the way, has an online site. A waiter would come on Sunday night. Was this breaking the rules? Let's just say there's no controlling legal authority.

There are many outlets for flowers, but

it is hard to get just what you want—pale peach, but please, no pink—if your screen, like mine, bleaches the colors. The good news is that the roses I ordered arrived fresh and on time. The bad news is their color roughly matched that of the ham.

On Saturday, calling frantically for items that hadn't arrived, I lived out the sorry fact of modern life that at any given moment, 1 in 5 Americans is on hold for the next available customer representative with the added indignity, around the holidays, of having to endure endless rounds of *Jingle Bell Rock*. Not to single out Williams-Sonoma—because it happens just about everywhere—but when you get your stuff depends on what a company's definition of "submit now" is. You submit, they process, and depending on the distributor, or the manufacturer, the popularity of your item, or who's out with the flu that day, you will get it overnight—or in a week. The polite "associate" at Williams-Sonoma sent me an apron and refunded my shipping costs. I guess there's such a thing as a free apron.

Since the tablecloth would come too late for the party, I sponge-ironed the creases out of my old one until it almost fit. The foie gras, sourdough and olive Pugliese breads from San Francisco did not arrive until Tuesday. I became a culinary Luddite, baking two dozen rolls. On the day of the dinner, the waiter called in sick at 4 p.m. Well, that's why God made daughters—and editors visiting from Manhattan who know their way around a corkscrew.

Dinner and a good time were had by all, confirming my belief that people go to restaurants for good food and to friends' leftovers for good company. There were lots of leftovers (I had e-mailed a Maryland caterer and got a shrimp appetizer and a spare filet). And the ham was the size of an aircraft carrier. The morning after, I staggered to my desk and clicked my way to D.C. Central Kitchen (dcccetralkitchen.org), which recycles food to homeless shelters. A team came right away and wiped out all traces of My Cyberdinner.

My effort cost more than \$2,000. That's not exactly a value meal. But when I read that during the week I was dining à la Web, Internet users spent more than double what had been spent the preceding week. I felt pleased that in this little piece of Web history I had played a part. Next time I have people over, I'm likely to revert to my old ways. I could have crawled to Safeway and back in the time it took to make an Internet dinner. But it was nice meeting Jeeves, even though he didn't work out in the end, and getting my Mac to honk.

All in all, a virtual success.



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People Who Mattered

A portrait gallery of those who made a difference in 1999

■ Alan Greenspan

IF YOU BELIEVE THAT THE BOOMING AMERICAN ECONOMY IS the story of the 1990s, then Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan gets my vote as Person of the Decade. The American economy will mark its longest period of uninterrupted expansion this February. During the past nine years, the U.S. unemployment rate has fallen to 4.1%, the lowest level in three decades, while inflation has remained under 3% and interest rates have remained relatively low. The stock market remains at record levels, and productivity grew twice as fast in the 1990s as it did in the 1980s. No one person, of course, can claim credit for this performance, but over the past dozen years, Greenspan's quiet confidence and masterly control of the nation's money supply have done much to convince consumers and Congress that the investment-driven economic growth is real. Although Chairman Greenspan will be 74 when his third term expires next June, the job remains his for the asking. As presidential contender John McCain suggested earlier this month, the one sure way to continue America's economic prosperity is to have Greenspan stay on, whether he is alive or dead. "If Mr. Greenspan should happen to die, God forbid . . . I would prop him up and put a pair of dark glasses on him." —Norman Pearlstine





■ Madeleine Albright

THE ECHOES OF HER PAST COULD BE HEARD IN EVERY STATEMENT OF uncompromising purpose, each insistence that her war was just. In her third year as the country's first female Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, a child of Europe's dark century, pushed and prodded the U.S. and its allies to punish the Continent's latest ethnic cleanser. It was a career-defining event: the NATO campaign to drive Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic's forces out of Kosovo became known as Madeleine's War. Through 78 days of bombing, Albright kept wavering allies on board, until Milosevic finally backed down. There were no U.S. combat deaths. NATO jets failed to stop Serbs from killing 10,000 Kosovars and driving an additional 700,000 out of the province, but Albright declared victory—and the refugees returned. At a time of disquiet about U.S. interventions in the world, Albright evoked an earlier moment in the American Century, when the U.S. did not shrink from sending its soldiers abroad to right wrongs and battle tyrants. "We're getting used to the idea," she told TIME, "that there are different ways of exerting American force."

MOLLY ROBERTS—CONRAD OUTLINE



Tiger Woods

THE TALENT IS SO IMMENSE, THE EXPECTATION so outsize, that it has often seemed easy to accuse Tiger Woods of underachievement. But in 1999 Woods buried those charges in a sand trap. After months of honing his swing, Woods went on a rampage the likes of which had not been seen in four decades. He won eight tournaments, including the PGA and Tour championships; during one stretch he won four consecutive starts, becoming the first player to do so since Ben Hogan in 1953. In September he helped propel the U.S. to a dramatic victory in the Ryder Cup. For the year Woods earned more than \$6.6 million—\$1 million more than Jack Nicklaus made in his entire PGA Tour career—and cemented his status as the world's most marketable athlete. The son of an African-American father and a Thai mother, he remained the most visible symbol of America's multihued society. Through it all, he showed a newfound maturity, the quiet assurance of a performer in full command of his abilities. "It's just going to get better," he said. "I'm not that old. I'm not over the hill yet." At 23, Tiger hasn't even finished his ascent.



■ Jiang Zemin

HIS IS THE MOST DELICATE—AND HARROWING—BALANCING ACT ON EARTH. Jiang Zemin finished the year with one monumental triumph: by cutting a deal with the U.S. to secure membership for China in the World Trade Organization, he opened his country's markets to a flood of foreign goods and investment. And yet the WTO agreement—like Jiang's imperial affectations at the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Maoist revolution—only masked his dilemmas. While he steered China into the global economy, Jiang remained at odds with the West on issues ranging from Kosovo to Taiwan. Inside his borders Jiang awkwardly tried to silence members of Falun Gong, the banned meditation cult. The world waits to see how well Jiang can maneuver on the high wire.

LIHUA VIA AP





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■ Queen Noor

SHE NEVER LEFT THE KING'S SIDE DURING HIS FINAL DAYS, ACCOMPANYING him on the plane from the Mayo Clinic back to Amman and keeping vigil at his bed as he lay dying. She remained there even at his funeral, shrouding herself from view so as not to defy Islamic custom. In the hours after King Hussein's death, she comforted hundreds of distraught countrywomen, and won the affection of her adopted nation. It came amid rumors that the Queen had tried to engineer the ascension of her 18-year-old son Hamzah over that of the King's brother Hassan. Abdullah, the King's eldest son from his first marriage, eventually climbed the throne, but the Queen saw Hamzah named crown prince. And the former Lisa Halaby retained her royal title, still the picture of lightly worn radiance and grace.

STYLING: VIVIANE



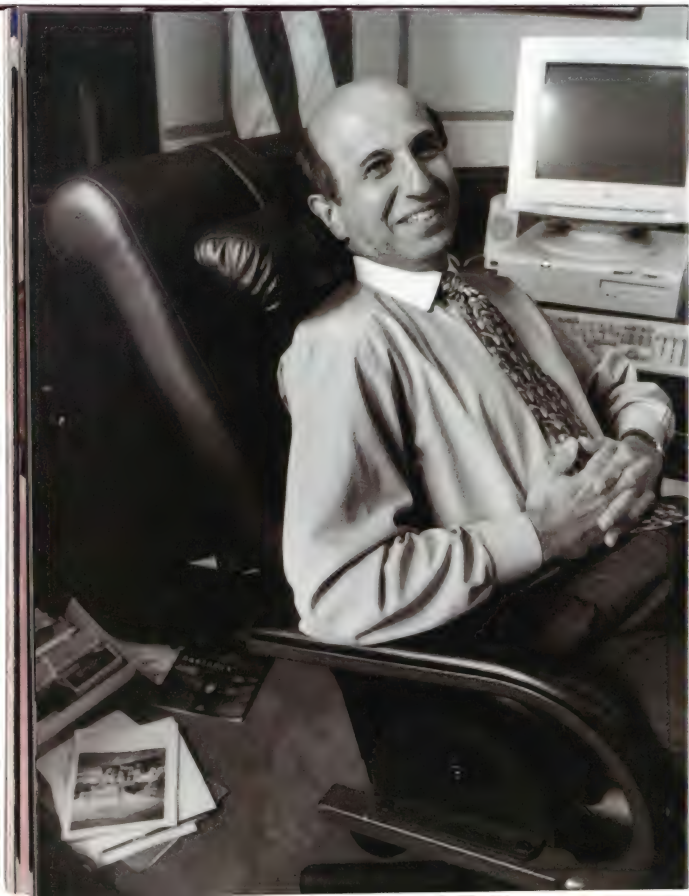
■ J.K. Rowling

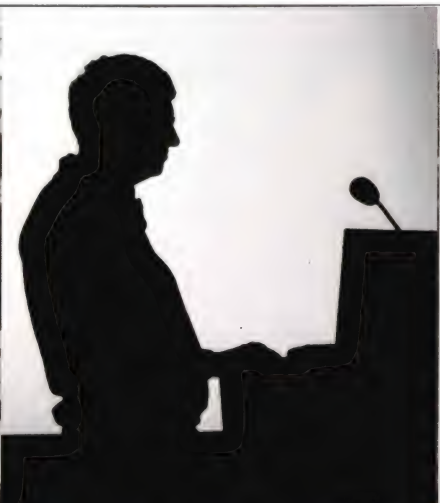
THE IDEA CAME TO THE ASPIRING AUTHOR IN 1990 DURING A TRAIN RIDE FROM MANCHESTER TO LONDON. It involved a young orphan who discovers he is a wizard, then is whisked away from his cruel aunt and uncle to be schooled in the use of his magical powers. This year that inspiration produced a publishing wonder: three novels about Harry Potter that keep crowding the top three spots on the fiction best-seller lists. Movie directors with the pick of projects are jostling for the right to bring Harry to the screen. J.K. Rowling, who lives in Edinburgh, Scotland, has four more Harry Potters planned. Her readers, young and old, are clearing more bookshelf space now.



■ Steve Jobs

AS A HOTHEADED YOUTH HE BECAME THE LIVING ICON OF THE PC REVOLUTION. THEN CAME A FLAME-out that was equally spectacular. But Steve Jobs' third act has been the most stunning of all. This fall the Pixar chairman and interim-ad-in-finitum CEO of Apple smacked a bases-clearing double: Pixar's *Toy Story 2* broke Thanksgiving box-office records, garnering \$81 million in five days, while Apple unveiled the iBook and reborn iMac. Jobs seems to have acquired a Midas touch. Apple's stock gained nearly 200% this year, and Pixar is now tweaking the storyboards for its next film, *Monsters, Inc.* Calmer and wiser, Jobs is getting people to think different once again.

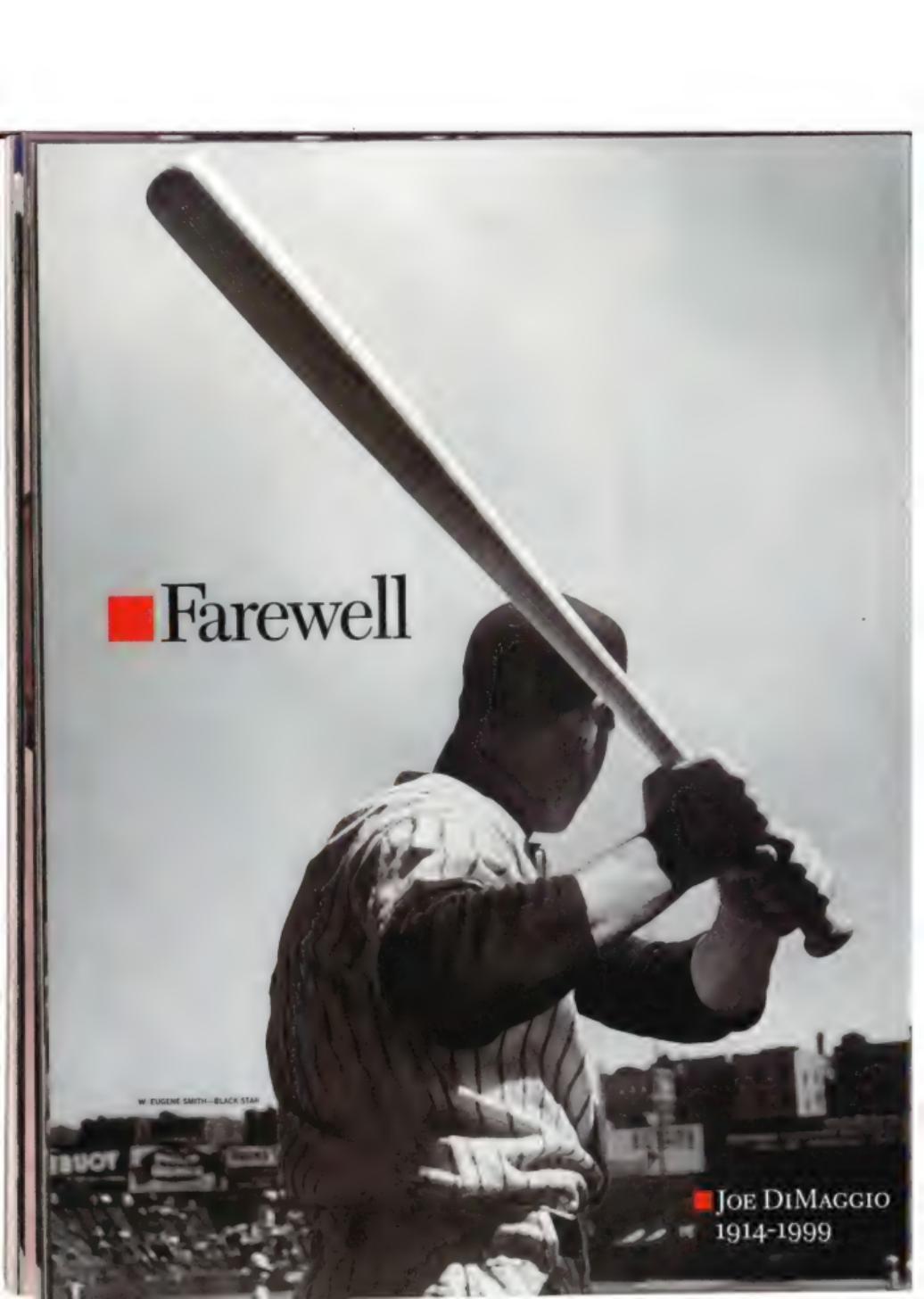




CHARLES BRUPA/AP

■ Joel Klein and Bill Gates


ANTITRUST DIVISION CHIEFS ARE AN OBSCURE LOT, TOILING anonymously over fusty treatises and recondite appellate briefs. But with his epic lawsuit against the software empire Microsoft this year, Joel Klein stepped into the floodlights, part trust-busting Ida Tarbell, part Goliath-slaying David. Microsoft's fate remains in the air, but Klein has already changed corporate history: no other company will ever write e-mail so recklessly or save it so efficiently. Gates, the other gladiator in this legal coliseum, has long been a household name. But the antitrust lawsuit—and the media frenzy it generated—has cast him in a new light and set off a national debate: Is the world's richest man a national treasure or an \$85 billion bully? Log on to a chat room and take a side.



■ Farewell

BY EUGENE SMITH—BLACK STAR

■ JOE DIMAGGIO
1914-1999



■ JOHN FITZGERALD
KENNEDY JR.
1960-1999

no boundaries
ford explores

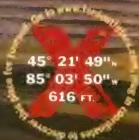
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HARD LESSONS

The Russian generals rely on blunt force to stave off casualties. But a rebel ambush in Grozny proves they have more to learn

By PAUL QUINN-JUDGE MOSCOW

RUSSIA'S GENERALS HAVE LEARNED some hard lessons. After the blood-soaked debacle of the last attempt to subdue Chechnya during 1994-1996, war gamers went back to the doctrine of the ferocious Russian who first conquered the Caucasus, 19th century general Alexei Yermolov: use siege warfare rather than frontal assault. Make slow advances under cover of heavy guns and bombardment. Avoid close encounters with a lightly armed but fearsome enemy. Applying these principles in their current campaign, which began in late September, Moscow's generals aimed to grind down the rebel force until the remnants would flee

back into the mountains and then keep them there, where they would gradually wither under the onslaught of winter and warplanes. It seemed to be working.

At least that was how it seemed until last week, when someone forgot the new war plan. On Wednesday evening a Russian armored column rolled deep into downtown Grozny, the besieged and ruined Chechen capital, only to be ambushed by 2,000 rebels. Caught in the open as they advanced into Minutka Square, seven tanks and eight personnel carriers ran into a devastating barrage of rifle fire and rocket-propelled grenades that slaughtered the soldiers as their vehicles exploded in flames. Three hours later, more than 100 Russian corpses lay amid the wreckage, ac-

cording to on-the-spot wire services. It was an awful replay of the head-on tactics that had cost Moscow so many casualties—and public support for the war—in a similar assault on Grozny five years ago.

Just that afternoon in Moscow, Russia's generals had boldly predicted imminent victory. The secret of their success, they said, was the change in tactics. Grozny would be taken "in a matter of days," declared General Valeri Manilov of the General Staff, and all of Chechnya would fall to Russia in a month or two. A day later, the military denied that any foray into Grozny had even taken place. Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, chief sponsor and political beneficiary of the war, dismissed reports of heavy casualties as "complete nonsense."

SETBACK: The bodies of two Russian soldiers, shown by Chechens to the press, from an armored column waylaid in Grozny

The Minutka Square battle was the first real setback for Russia's military since it launched its "counter-terror operation," as Moscow insists on calling the war against Chechen independence. Russian generals are once again figures of respect, not the butt of jokes. The three ground commanders, Colonel General Viktor Kazantsev, Lieut. General Gennadi Troshev and Major General Vladimir Shamanov, were recently named heroes of the Russian Federation. The country's self-confidence has flourished along with its armed forces. And Putin's supporters happily predict that a victory will propel him to the presidency next July.

It is not clear whether Wednesday's fiasco was the start of a major assault, a reconnaissance probe of Chechen defenses or just a stupid mistake. Up to now, Russian forces have marched across the republic with, they claim, little resistance. Their battle plan called for slow, steady advances until the rebels engaged them. Then they would let their vastly superior artillery and air forces bomb the Chechen fighters and strafe their village hideouts, until they fell back and Russian troops could move safely forward again. Since late September, a Russian force that now numbers 100,000—just about every viable fighting man in the armed forces—has managed to retake control of nearly 60% of Chechnya. For more than a month, it has laid siege to Grozny, pounding the capital with artillery and aerial strikes while ground troops slowly tighten the noose.

The toll on civilians has been devastating, but Moscow seems not to care. One of Yermolov's tactics was to destroy any village whose inhabitants resisted, as an example. General Troshev, commanding the eastern sector, takes the same approach. No one knows how many civilians have died, especially in Grozny where the blunt force of artillery, aircraft and missile batteries has been indiscriminate.

But the strategy works much less well against rebel fighters. They too have altered tactics. This time, as soon as the Russians open up with artillery, the rebels retreat to safe new lines of defense. Moscow claims to have killed 7,000 fighters, leaving 12,000 to 15,000 in the field. Western intelligence puts Chechen strength at 20,000 and suspects that a revenge-seeking relative steps in to replace every rebel killed.

In fact, the only casualties that really worry Moscow are Russian. Media support is crucial to the generals, who believe, like their American counterparts in Vietnam, that they lost the last war because of bad press. This time they are taking no chances. In an operation that is half Soviet-

style press censorship and half Desert Storm-style media management, the Russian command is totally controlling coverage. TV networks are not allowed to photograph Russian casualties and never show combat. When things go wrong, as they apparently did last week in Grozny, the official response to foreign reports is apologetic. Accounts of the incident were, said General Alexander Zdanovich, spokesman for the internal security service, "active measures" concocted by Western intelligence services to discredit Russia.

The generals rightly fear body bags. Heavy troop losses drove them from Chechnya last time and could provoke a drop in support for this war any time. As of last week, the Russians admitted to 400 dead soldiers. But U.S. intelligence, which has been tracking the numbers closely, believes the death toll had already neared 1,000 before the slaughter last week.

So far, though, Moscow is winning the home-propaganda battle. Opinion surveys show that around 60% of Russians support the war as a necessity to quell Chechen militants. The generals are sure their Prime Minister will back them to the end. But while "there is political and military consensus on how to do this right," says Sherman Garnett of Michigan State University, an expert on the Russian military, "whether it works or not is another matter."

The Chechens will try to kill as many Russians as possible in Grozny, then retire into the hills to wage guerrilla warfare with hit-and-run strikes into occupied towns and cities. The Russians say they are strangling the rebels in a ring of steel, but squeezing Jell-O is a better analogy. As Russian troops advance, Chechen guerrillas slip through the lines to harass them, even in the northern plains that Moscow claims are completely Russian controlled.

This is the fifth military campaign mounted against the rebellious republic in this century. The Chechen problem is never solved; it merely goes into remission. Most revolts have been suppressed by a combination of massive force on one side and a breakdown of leadership on the other. Chechnya's elected President, Aslan Maskhadov, continues to call for a political settlement—and so do Washington and the Europeans. But Putin and his generals seem adamant.

At the moment, Moscow seems a breakthrough in Chechnya. In all probability, however, the Russians are only locked in a futile, bloody cycle of occupation and resistance. And they will remain so until they realize that there is something terribly wrong in their relationship with a people that must be crushed into submission about once every generation. —With reporting by

Photo: Walker/Wickinson

To defeat Chechen rebels, the Russian generals are ...

Advancing their forces slowly under cover of heavy guns and aerial bombardment

... using elite troops ...

Experienced airborne troops and marine units from the Baltic and Far East



... and a variety of weapons ...

Armor, heavy artillery, fighter-bombers and helicopter gunships that hit Chechens indiscriminately



... designed to encircle the rebels in Grozny

Then they will push the remnants into the mountains to expire



The Terror Countdown

A capture on the U.S.-Canadian border heightens fears of a millennial attack against Americans

By MASSIMO CALABRESI

THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT THE last man off the 6 p.m. ferry from Victoria, B.C., to Port Angeles, Wash., that didn't seem right to U.S. Customs inspector Diana Dean last Tuesday. She threw a couple of routine questions at him, and he choked, claiming to be a French Canadian named Benni Noris. When officials opened the trunk of his rented Chrysler, they found what looked like the contents of a bombmaker's shopping cart: 118 lbs. of urea; two 22-oz., three-

bag. One theory is that Noris—who, law-enforcement officials say, is actually an Algerian named Ahmed Ressam, 32—had been dispatched to wreak havoc at the New Year's Eve celebration at Seattle's Space Needle, which is close to a hotel where he had reserved a room. Some speculated, though with little hard evidence, that he was backed by the Afghanistan-based terrorist Osama bin Laden. Whatever Ressam was planning, his arrest has heightened the state of alert as the countdown to New Year's Eve continues.

The State Department has issued a

Arizona rock quarry last week. While such incidents may be unrelated to the millennium, they are being closely investigated by a host of law-enforcement agencies, including the FBI, the CIA, the Defense and Treasury departments and Customs.

The main worry overseas is Bin Laden, who according to Clarke has expanded his network from his base in Afghanistan to 52 countries. Bin Laden is drawing on new financial backers to supplement his personal fortune and the profits that Clarke says he reaps from heroin sales, and he has drawn a diverse crew of adherents from Libya to the Philippines. "He has an indigenous base in each country that stays quiet," says Clarke. "When assault teams come into the country, there's support there. It's a very different type of terrorism than we've ever seen before."

The U.S. is working with local governments to bring down Bin Laden's cells and has offered a reward of up to \$5 million for

information leading to his capture. Government agents have launched psychological warfare, leaking reports to the Pakistani press of U.S. assassination teams sent to take out Bin Laden. The stories have apparently had an effect. He is reported to be sleeping in a different location every night.

Back home most of the attention is being directed at right-wing militias and doomsday cults. "Religious motivation and the new-world-order conspiracy theory are the two driving forces behind the potential for millennial violence," says an FBI report circulated to police stations around the country. Investigators are raising defenses and closely monitoring people considered suspicious. "We are looking for groups and individuals, and if they move, they're going to get caught,"

says Clarke. The FBI's 56 field offices will be open New Year's Eve, and staffs at the command centers will have representatives from counterterror task forces. Most of the agents assigned to these units will be on beeper duty, not in the office, but all must be close at hand, armed and ready to move. Some field offices, such as those in Washington, New York City and Los Angeles, have teams ready to be deployed instantly around the world to investigate terrorism against Americans wherever it may strike.

—With reporting by

Flaine Kharoun/Washington



THE SUSPECT, above, claimed to be French Canadian, but investigators say he's Algerian

EVIDENCE found in his trunk included this timing device, right, and other bomb material

THE INVESTIGATION is focusing on possible links to terrorist Osama bin Laden, left

quarters-full jars of nitroglycerine; 14 lbs. of sulfate; and four timing devices consisting of Casio watches, nine-volt batteries and circuit boards. The man bolted but didn't make it six blocks before being captured.

The arrest came at a tense time for U.S. law-enforcement agents, who are on the lookout for possible terrorism planned to coincide with the millennium celebrations. "He's connected with someone," said Richard Clarke, U.S. national coordinator for counterterrorism. "People don't just walk around with that stuff in their kit

bag." One theory is that Noris—who, law-enforcement officials say, is actually an Algerian named Ahmed Ressam, 32—had been dispatched to wreak havoc at the New Year's Eve celebration at Seattle's Space Needle, which is close to a hotel where he had reserved a room. Some speculated, though with little hard evidence, that he was backed by the Afghanistan-based terrorist Osama bin Laden. Whatever Ressam was planning, his arrest has heightened the state of alert as the countdown to New Year's Eve continues.

The State Department has issued a

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STARWOOD PREFERRED GUEST



Keeping His Eye on The Ball

Jesse Ventura's mouth is muzzled, and he's focused on running Minnesota

By MATTHEW COOPER

YOU CAN PRINT THIS," SAYS JESSE VENTURA, eating a banana and a granola bar. He's still miffed about that damn *Playboy* interview, the one that sent his polls plummeting. "That was my fault in simply not saying 'some,'" he explains. "Had I simply said some religions are a sham and a crutch for weak-minded people, probably not that much would have been made of it." Ventura is peeved that belittlers, like Gary Bauer and Geraldine Ferraro, have dubbed him a bigot. "I looked it up," Ventura says of the word. "It's someone who's intolerable [Jesse's Yogi Berraism] of any other religion but their own. I'm the opposite. I'm tolerant of all religions ... I don't care if someone wants to go out there and worship the bark on a tree." The ex-wrestler growls, "Wait 'til I ever see them face to face." At 5 ft. 6 in., Bauer should hope that day doesn't come.

This is what it's like being Jesse Ventura at the millennium: you're always being dragged into the ring—by reporters, by opponents and by yourself. You're the Governor of Minnesota, and what you most want to do is, well, govern Minnesota. You've got plans: you want to raise hunting license fees and use the money to protect wildlife habitats. You want more state services available on the Internet. You want to abolish the two-house state legislature and replace it with a single house. And yet there are these distractions. You go to a Timberwolves game and shout at the ref like any NBA fan, and then you're ridiculed on TV as a hothead. No wonder Ventura jokes that "benevolent dictatorship" may be the "perfect form of government."

Alas, he doesn't have the luxury. Instead, the aversion of being thrown "off

message," as the polls say, has left Ventura in a bind. He wants to have a national influence, although he vows not to run for President next year: "I have no desire for that job." Ventura would like to see a Reform Party movement; he'd like his party to consider other presidential candidates in addition to Pat Buchanan and Donald Trump. But the more he speaks about anything but governing Minnesota, the more he risks seeming distracted. "His strength is that people think he's fighting for them," says a Democratic pollster. "If they ever think it's about him, he's dead." That day hasn't come yet; no one's polled his popularity publicly since October when it sank to the low 40s from a phenomenal perch near 70. But Minnesota polls think he's coming back, and his newfound reticence may have something to do with it. "I'm still myself ... but I find myself not giving opinions on things that have nothing to do with government," he says.

It's a bit sad that Ventura is taking a time-out, and it's also a '90s irony: today's political culture craves authenticity but bristles when it actually gets some. But ride

with the Guv in his Lincoln Navigator, and you find that even the chastened Ventura is more candid than 99% of pols. On the Cuban trade embargo he says what self-styled truth tellers like Bill Bradley don't: "It's stupid. Fidel's outlasted eight Presidents. Is it an ego thing? Do we have to wait for him to die?" He's the rare non-Democratic Governor who gives Clinton generous credit for the economy. Try getting George W. Bush to do that.

Ventura also has strong words for Ross Perot, his Reform Party rival. He calls Russ Verney, a Perot ally finishing his term as head of the party, Russ "Varmint." A WTO-loving, NAFTA-defending free trader, Ventura wants to rid the party of its protectionist platform plank: "That's something Perot wrote in." On trade he considers Perot a hypocrite. "All his businesses are international, so if it's good enough for him, why not for everyone else?"

But for all his outrageousness, Ventura is proving to be a good manager. Yes, it helps that he's got a surplus. But he's been praised for his appointees. And he's dived deep into the bureaucracy to push his ideas. On a recent visit to the natural resources department, Ventura asked detailed, even wonky, questions about its greenways program to link environmentally sensitive areas. Even opponents like Democratic House leader Tom Pugh concede that "he had a very good first legislative session."

Above all, Ventura wants a unicameral legislature. At first, his obsession with unicameralism seems like an exotic if not weird fixation, sort of like collecting Belgian coins. Right now, only Nebraska has a unicameral legislature. So why the enthusiasm? One reason: Ventura believes that many of the worst political shenanigans come in closed-door conference committees when House and Senate leaders write omnibus budget bills. With one house, there'd be no such secret confabs.

Ventura wants the issue to come before voters. But getting the measure on the ballot requires legislative approval. Getting legislators to acquiesce to a referendum that could abolish a third of their jobs is a hard sell, especially in a year when Ventura will, despite his efforts to stay focused, face the distractions of presidential politics. But Ventura—still a volunteer high school football coach—wants not to be sidelined. ■



THE WYNN Jesse relaxes relief with his housemate

A Hex on Your Taxes

Politicians and Web retailers want to keep e-sales levy-free. But others are vexed

By ROMESH RATNESAR

CALL HIM A RELIC, BUT CLIFFORD WALDECK likes doing business off-line. His 5,000-sq.-ft. office-supply store in downtown San Francisco rings up about \$1.6 million a year selling paper clips and printer cartridges to customers from the nearby financial district. "Our business is based on people being in the neighborhood," he says. But Waldeck fears his walk-in patrons will soon realize that they can buy all the stationery they want from stores on the Internet—and never pay a dime of sales tax. As vice mayor of Mill Valley, a San Francisco suburb, Waldeck has another reason to be irked. Tax-free e-commerce transactions could ravage his city's sales-tax revenues. "I feel like I'm being double hit," he moans.

And so Waldeck and scores of big and small businesspeople like him last week vented their frustration over one of the new economy's most combustible issues. Their forum was a hearing in San Francisco held by the 19-member advisory commission on electronic commerce, a congressionally created panel that has until April to recommend a policy on how to handle Internet taxation after Congress's three-year moratorium on e-commerce taxes expires in 2001.

The debate has become a crash site where business, politics and technology collide. It's a bad scene for civic-minded policymakers and a grand opportunity for electioneering candidates. "Some people decided early on they ... weren't going to budge," says Oregon Senator Ron Wyden. "The whole process has become thoroughly politicized."

Given the billions at stake, that comes as no shock. Because e-tailers have no "physical presence"—such as a store or warehouse—in most states, they are not required to collect sales tax from customers. (They're supposed to pay the tax themselves, but no one does.) Web business owners argue that this is fair, since their companies don't benefit from services funded by sales taxes, such as garbage collection and policing. But state and local governments howl that the \$10 billion a year in tax revenues they expect to lose to the Internet by 2003 pay for the roads that online mer-

chants use to deliver their goods to customers. Bricks-and-mortar executives fume that the absence of e-commerce taxes makes their sexy online competitors look even more irresistible. Slow out of the gate, lobbyists for those forces are gaining clout on Capitol Hill.

They need it. G.O.P. leaders have loaded the advisory commission with anti-tax ideologues like former Microsoft lob-

byst Grover Norquist and Virginia Governor James Gilmore, the commission's chair, who has proposed a permanent ban on Internet taxes. That idea is opposed by the Clinton Administration and a group led by Utah's Republican Governor Michael Leavitt, which favors an Internet tax system. The commission, which is considering a broad range of e-commerce issues, is headed for a stalemate on this one. Says panelist John Sidgmore, vice chairman of MCI WorldCom: "We're going to agree on just about everything except the sales tax."

That's fine with the four major presidential candidates, who don't want to upset their high-tech contributors. John McCain has vowed to "keep the Internet tax-free forever"; George W. Bush has not taken the

same pledge but is unlikely to back any new taxes. Democrats Bill Bradley and Al Gore won't say never to online taxation, but both support keeping the Net tax-free through 2001.

Yet keeping the status quo could have risky consequences. Leaving e-commerce untaxed amounts to a bonanza for Web entrepreneurs and Americans who own computers with Internet access. Within a few years, low-income customers could end up paying a disproportionate share of state and local taxes at stores like Waldeck's Office Supplies. That's if they still exist. Clifford Waldeck says he now makes 7% of his sales through his company's newest feature, its website. —*Reported by Sally B. Donnelly/Washington and David S. Jackson/San Francisco*

E-TAX PLANS

A federal commission is weighing three views on imposing online taxes:

1 Never

Blanket tax exemption for e-commerce. Top choice of Web retailers and free-marketers

2 Sometimes

Sales tax applies only if online merchant has a physical presence in a state to which it ships goods

3 Always

Credit-card companies collect tax on online purchases and immediately remit it to the states





ERIC HARRIS and DYLAN KLEBOLD

In a videotape made before Columbine, Harris said he and Klebold had "evolved one step above humans." Antisocial personalities typically have their own perverse world view



ANDREW W. LUSKMAN

A chronic, boastful liar, he killed five men, including designer Gianni Versace



MICHAELA GILLETTE

Police charge that he mutilated patients while pretending to be a plastic surgeon



LUIS GARAVITO

The Colombian drifter posed as a beggar and a monk to kidnap and kill 140 children



TED BUNDY

He was a master manipulator who confessed to murdering 50 women

BEHAVIOR

Bad to the Bone

How to explain evildoers like Harris and Klebold? Some psychologists say there's a diagnosis at hand

By HARRIET BAROVICK

TO THEIR VICTIMS THEY SEEMED pretty normal at first, even admirable. Reinaldo Silvestre, a charming Miami con man with no medical training, is alleged to have operated on his plastic-surgery patients by shoving implants into their chests with a spatula; several were permanently mutilated. A drifter named Luis Garavito confessed in October to kidnapping, torturing and killing 140 children over five years in Colombia. Dylan Klebold went to the prom (and Eric Harris wanted to) before shooting up Columbine High in April. Predators with such little regard for morality and human life defy rational explanation, right?

Wrong, say an increasingly vocal group of psychiatrists and criminologists. Many of the most depraved, coldhearted criminals, they suggest, suffer from a definable but little studied psychiatric disorder known as antisocial personality. "We blame crime on everything from bad parenting to violent video games," says University of Iowa psychiatrist Donald Black, whose book *Bad Boys, Bad Men: Confronting Antisocial Personality Disorder* was published early this year. "But medical journals don't cover ASP, and no one wants to look at it. It's baffling."

Not to be confused with occasional periods of bad behavior or crimes of passion, ASP (also referred to as sociopathy) is defined in the latest *Diagnostic and Statistical*

Manual as a lifelong "pervasive pattern" of rule breaking and violating the rights of others that begins before age 15. ASPs are chronic troublemakers whose symptoms vary greatly in severity: they can be constant money borrowers, black sheep, pathological liars, white-collar criminals or, at the most severe end of the continuum, murderous felons. They are impulsive and grandiose, don't learn from punishment, are poor self-observers, blame others for their problems and see themselves as victims. Their primary hallmark is a striking inability to feel empathy or guilt. According to a national study of psychiatric disorders, an estimated 7 million people in the U.S. have antisocial personality disorder, eight times as many men as women.

The shocking videotapes that Harris and Klebold made before the Columbine massacre provide a unique glimpse into the antisocial mind, say those who have studied ASP. "What's frightening is how cold and calculated all this was, with no regard for the consequences," says Black. "They view it through their perverse world view, not seeing it as others would, which is a characteristic of antisocials." Though the two boys expressed remorse for the hurt they were about to cause their parents, their ability to shut off such pangs of guilt is also characteristic of ASP. "There was some remorseful thinking, but not enough to compensate for the enormous excitement of the enterprise they were contemplating," says Stanton Samenow, a

psychologist and author of several books on criminal personality.

Sociopathy has been recognized as a social menace since the mid-1800s (when it was called "moral insanity"), and antisocial personality disorder has been listed in the *DSM* since 1968. Yet surprisingly little research has been done on it. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, only \$3 million was spent last-year for research on ASP, and \$31 million was spent on its childhood predecessor, conduct disorder. Yet \$132 million was devoted to schizophrenia.

One reason for the resistance is that ASP is still not universally accepted by psychologists as a diagnosis. Some critics dismiss it as a category so broad as to be useless. "It's used for everyone from the person who cheats on his income taxes to Attila the Hun," says Fred Berlin, associate professor of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins medical school. "It's a label masquerading as an explanation." Others wonder whether the term is simply a catchall psychological description for people who are habitual criminals. Yet proponents argue that the disorder's core ingredients—a lifelong pattern of behavior, a willingness to break rules and hurt others, a lack of empathy or guilt—set certain criminals apart. "Empathy is what stops you and me from doing horrible things," says Black. "Every disorder has been criticized for being too broad. But the description of ASP hasn't fundamentally changed since 1968."

Kathleen (not her real name), a suburban mom from Iowa, wishes she'd known about it 27 years ago. She says there was something chilling about the way her only son coaxed her for a cookie at age two. "It was way beyond manipulative. He was very adept at reading me, at figuring out what it took to get him what he wanted." By adolescence, the handsome, popular high school athlete had taken to stealing from her purse, torturing animals, driving drunk and making violent threats against classmates. Typical boyish rebel-

Normal, Dull Days? "No!"

lion? "There was a difference," Kathleen says. "I didn't sense any real remorse. He would use his charm to overcome my anger." Now she has accepted that her son—a lawyer with diagnosed ASP who changes jobs regularly, terrorizes former girlfriends and accrues credit-card debt—probably won't change.

The search for causes of antisocial personality disorder gives rise to the usual debate between nature and nurture. Studies have found that insufficient bonding between infants and mothers is a strong indicator for ASP and that people with ASP often come from abusive or impoverished home environments. But increasingly, research is focusing on biological factors. Studies have shown that identical twins have a dramatically higher chance of sharing ASP than do fraternal twins. Adrian Raine, a neuroscientist at the University of Southern California, has found that the brains of people with ASP look different from those of the rest of the population, with less gray matter in the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain that regulates behavior and social judgment. Just last month University of Iowa neurobiologist Antonio Damasio reported findings from a study showing that early brain injuries affect the long-term ability to distinguish between right and wrong.

Thomas Thompson, a New Mexico forensic psychologist, insists that ASPs are "hardwired to act out," and that "they lack free will." His evaluations recently helped convert the sentences of two death-row inmates to life in prison. Yet Thompson's brand of biological determinism sets off alarms for many. "The idea that you're simply born bad is an evil misconception," says Peter Fonagy, director of the Child and Family Center at the Menninger Clinic, who has done a review of conduct-disorder studies for the British government. "We have to look at intervening early and how that can help change antisocials."

How can the disorder be treated? Though certain medications, like Depakote, curb individual symptoms like aggression and impulsiveness, there have been no drug trials specifically for ASP. Fonagy claims intensive psychotherapy and parent training can help. But researchers say that signs of ASP often show up by age four or five, and that if the behavior is not caught and dealt with before adolescence, there's little hope of making significant change. New York City psychoanalyst Leon Hoffman points out another problem: people suffering from ASP are difficult to get into therapy because they typically don't think anything is wrong with them. "They can be a psychiatrist's worst nightmare," he says. And society's as well. —Reported by Debbie Seaman

AS IT HEADED INTO THE LAST WEEK BEFORE CHRISTMAS VACATION, COLUMBINE High School was enjoying its first full month without a single warning or suicide or other incident related to the April 20 killing of 12 students and a teacher. School life was returning to some semblance of normal. But then came last week's release of videotapes made by the Columbine killers, first reported in TIME. And then on Wednesday a student using an Internet chat room received an anonymous threat against the school—which moved authorities to close the school and postpone exams. Back came the horrible memories and the distractions of the public spotlight. "Just when you're beginning to heal," says math teacher Michelle DiManna, "you can't."

They keep trying. More than 4,000 people thronged to the school's parking lot on a chilly Thursday night for a long-planned concert, held to thank all the hospitals, churches, police and others who have helped Columbine recover. Despite the Internet threat, the mood was downright jolly. Principal Frank DeAngelis bunny-hopped with Snoopy. The crowd rocked when the band sang Noël to the tune of YMCA. Tim McLoone, president of Holiday Express, the concert's headline act, announced, "At 6:30 this morning they told me school was canceled. Do these people ever have a normal, dull day?" And the crowd roared, "NO!"

The response sounded almost proud and defiant, and beneath it lay a determination long evident at Columbine. In the days following the massacre, Columbine students demanded to return as soon as possible; they wouldn't let Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold take away their school. So the district, with the help of 137 contractors who donated some of their services, completed six months of construction in six weeks, replacing bloody carpeting with tiles and rebuilding the bomb-scarred cafeteria. Meanwhile, DeAngelis so effectively convinced students and parents of the school's safety that enrollment rose to 1983 students—15 more than last year.

Students and staff still suffer emotional highs and lows. "It's hard to concentrate," says junior Ashley Prinzi. "When you're bored in class, everything comes back, because this is where it happened." Yet most are learning, however slowly, to move on. Last month a student in Carol Samson's English class was so struck by something she read in the Charles Frazier novel *Cold Mountain* that she stayed after class to show the passage to Samson. "Your grief hasn't changed a thing," it reads. "All you can choose to do is go on or not." Frank Peterson says he now gives his biology students more in-class assignments so he can work with them one on one, "slowing down the pace" and taking "the time to get to know these sophomores as people."

DeAngelis remains fiercely optimistic. "There have been so many reasons for teachers to quit, for students to quit, for parents to be afraid to send their students here," he says. "But this is an outstanding high school." There was some relief at Columbine when authorities quickly arrested Michael Ian Campbell, 18, of Cape Coral, Fla., and charged him with sending the Internet threat. But DeAngelis also knows that April 20, 2000, is just around the corner. He is already working with a planning committee to make sure the anniversary is a memorial, not a flashback. —By Andrew Goldstein, with reporting by Maureen Harrington/LitHub



School security was stepped up after the arrival of an e-mail reportedly sent by Michael Ian Campbell, suspect

Outside, Wanting In

Home schoolers won the right to escape the public system. But should they be able to play on its teams?

By JOHN CLOUD ANN ARBOR

THE TOLBERTS OF PINCKNEY, IN SOUTHEASTERN Michigan, are all very tall. It can be hard for girls to be big, which is one reason James and Denise Tolbert were happy that Kristina, their 16-year-old, 6-ft. 3-in. daughter, wanted to play basketball. But Pinckney High School won't let Kristina on the team. Like virtually all schools in the state, Pinckney has a rule that no one can play any sport unless she's enrolled. And Kristina and her brother Josh (only 14 and already 6 ft. 2 in.) are home schooled.

Now James Tolbert has sued the school system to change those rules. And other home-school advocates have taken this issue to Michigan's legislature, where it has split the Republican Party. For Tolbert, it's an issue of basic fairness: "The state should provide these [athletic] benefits on a nondiscriminatory basis," says Stephen Safranek, the lawyer behind the Tolberts and six other families. "We all pay the same taxes."

Opponents also see it as a matter of fairness—not fairness to taxpayers but to students. Officials say kids in traditional schools follow strict requirements—good attendance, decent grades—to become eligible for athletics. They say they have no way to know whether parents would lie to make their home schoolers eligible. And above all, administrators fear that home schoolers, who would parachute in for practice after a day at the house, could undermine a school's sense of community. They argue that a full-time social investment in a school is what entitles kids to play basketball.

Safranek says this argument ignores school rules, which allow enrolled students never to set foot on campus. (They can take classes at community colleges if they wish.) He suspects the rules are really motivated by bias against home schooling, and he takes offense at the notion that his clients would lie to make their kids eligible.

That home schoolers have begun a debate about the nature of a

school community is a little strange. For years they simply withdrew kids from the broader community often because they felt its schools had become antireligious. They fought bitter battles for the right to change old compulsory-education laws, which have now been rewritten or reinterpreted in every state to allow home schooling. Many Americans still have an image of home schoolers as conservative ideologues at best—and weird hermits at worst.

But such images, always a stretch, are

now totally outmoded. Those who study the issue say there are probably 1 million to 1.7 million home schoolers in the U.S. (more than 1% of school-age children). Whatever the precise figure, it has jumped since Columbine (North Carolina found this fall that its number of registered home schools had shot up 22% to 16,022 since April).

The home-school movement has reached beyond the odd coalition of religious conservatives and countercultural libertarians who started it. Now the top reason parents give for home schooling is dissatisfaction with public schools, where guns, drugs, and peer pressure leave them feeling vulnerable. This new generation of home-schooling families doesn't necessarily believe that public schools are unholly. And many want their children's character toughened by swim meets and coaches' whistles and Friday-night football games.

The kids want it too. "That issue is really the bane of the home-school movement," says Isabel Lyman, who is writing a book on home schooling for the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank. "The teen years are the highest years of attrition for home schoolers, in part because teens want to play sports." Parents have agitated for that right in various states for more than a decade, when the first large cohort of home schoolers hit high school age. They succeeded in 10 states, which passed laws mandating that schools allow those children taught at home to play on public school teams (some of the laws allow access to other electives such as band and art classes).

But the home-school movement is itself divided over the issue, which is one reason home-school-friendly states such as Michigan haven't passed similar laws. Michael Farris, who cofounded the Home School Legal Defense Association in 1983, says he believes "rank-and-file" home-school parents are split fifty-fifty on whether their kids should play on public teams. What's the point of being home schooled, some argue, if banging down the gymnasium door exposes you again to the culture—and the regulations—inside?

The Tolberts are also divided. Though Denise Tolbert says she supports her husband, she didn't join the lawsuit. "I don't want them back in the school at all," she says of Kristina and Josh, who used to attend public schools. Denise says she disapproved of what she describes as the sexually charged atmosphere and godless teachings of their middle school.



HOME SCHOOLERS SAY kids like the Tolberts, with lawyer Safranek, should be on public teams since their parents pay taxes...

...BUT OFFICIALS like Roberts say home schoolers would unfairly displace full-timers

Jack E. White

When Silence Is a Sin

Too many black leaders ignore Africa's biggest crisis

THE REV. EUGENE F. RIVERS III, PASTOR OF BOSTON'S AZUSA CHRISTIAN Community church, is my kind of preacher: a former gang member with a Harvard education who has devoted himself to keeping ghetto kids out of trouble. He also believes it's his Christian duty to verbally slap the black establishment upside the head when it's falling down on its job. In 1992, for example, he infuriated black intellectuals by accusing them of endlessly debating "Gramsci, Foucault, Derrida, Jameson, Bourdieu, Lukacs, Habermas, and Marx" instead of trying to find solutions to inner-city crime and drug abuse. Three years later, he excoriated them for romanticizing "cynically anti-Semitic, mean-spirited, and simply incompetent" demagogues such as Louis Farrakhan while the underclass plunged into misery.

Now the 49-year-old minister is at it again, blasting most of what passes for black leadership nowadays for failing to speak up about the AIDS epidemic in Africa. As Rivers ignited earlier this month in an open letter to African-

American thinkers, clergymen and politicians, "What verdict will our descendants render upon their ancestors who stood silently by as a generation of African children was reduced to a biological underclass by this sexual holocaust?"

Good question. By any rational standard, AIDS is the most profound threat to Africa's survival since slavery. Left unchecked, it will decimate the continent. According to the United Nations, 23.3 million Africans are infected by the AIDS virus, more than twice as many as in the rest of the world combined. Nearly 14 million Africans have died from the disease. The number

Rivers targets Afrocentric tip service



of African children left orphaned by AIDS will soar to 13 million by 2001, a catastrophic burden in poor nations that for the most part lack even a semblance of Western-style social-welfare agencies. Millions will die sooner than they have to because they cannot afford expensive drug therapy.

In recent years, civil rights leaders have awakened belatedly to the toll of AIDS among black Americans, who now account for more than half of the new cases of HIV infection in the U.S. But for all their kente-cloth shawls and lavish Kwanza celebrations, only a handful of African-American leaders, such as Julian Bond of the N.A.A.C.P., philosopher Cornel West and former Congressman Ron Dellums, along with a few church and charitable organizations, have aggressively addressed the disaster in Africa. As Rivers says, it's long past time for black leaders "to come from under the shroud of denial and apathy" and make fighting the African AIDS crisis a front-burner issue in next year's presidential campaign. In other words, to transform our professed love for our Motherland into more than Afrocentric lip service.

Suppose, for example, that the black intellectuals who have been burning up the Internet to castigate the alleged shortcomings of Harvard Professor Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s television series *Wonders of the African World* were to devote an equal amount of brainpower to publicizing the AIDS epidemic. They might come up with ways to make drugs more available to impoverished Africans or to build support in Congress for California Democrat Barbara C. Lee's proposal for an anti-AIDS "Marshall Plan." They might develop strategies for changing the promiscuous sexual behavior that allows the disease to spread so rapidly. At the very least, they could make sure that the world does not turn its back on the unfolding tragedy. To stand by silently would be a sin.

To help fight AIDS, contact Africare at 202-462-3614 or visit africare.org.

Kristina still has friends on the public school team, and she knows that more college recruiters would see her play for the high school. But she does have an outlet now for her abilities: the Lansing Crusaders, a team composed entirely of home schoolers, which plays other such teams as well as those of private schools. Kristina loves her teammates; the Tolberts keep a giant scrapbook full of home-school mementos, including photos of a beaming Kristina with the other Crusaders during their undefeated 1998-99 season. But Lansing is about an hour from Pinckney. "We had to buy a new car," says James Tolbert, who works two jobs so Denise can teach, "and we put a lot of miles on it."

Tolbert inquired about suing the school and was told it would cost \$60,000. So he was excited when he heard about Safranek, the lawyer in Ann Arbor who has brought the current suit. The case is financed by the Thomas More Center for Law and Justice, where Safranek works; it's a religious-rights group founded by Thomas Monaghan, the conservative Catholic who sold Domino's Pizza last year for something like \$1 billion.

The case has gone well so far. In August a state judge issued a stinging decision against the schools. She said that while participation in interscholastic athletics is a privilege, not a right, there's no reason tax-paying home-school families shouldn't enjoy that privilege. But it was only a preliminary ruling that allowed the case to proceed; the first full trial is set to begin in the spring.

Separately, some advocates pursued this issue in the Michigan political arena earlier this year. Some Republicans, including popular Governor John Engler, supported them. Engler called for home-schooler access to public teams in his state of the state address. But proponents of a bill forcing the change were no match for John Roberts, head of the Michigan High School Athletic Association, the nonprofit that writes the rules for athletic eligibility, rules adopted by almost every school. Now in his 14th year as executive director, Roberts wields enormous influence over high school sports in a state that takes them seriously. He warned that home schoolers could dislodge public school students from their teams. "If you don't want your son or daughter displaced," he told one sympathetic sports editor, "you have to stand up now." When the Engler-backed bill came up in the state senate in June, it got just three votes.

Safranek is hoping for a friendlier hearing in court. He's also willing to compromise. "We would follow some reasonable regulations," he says, such as a rule that home schoolers pass exams to be eligible. "But we shouldn't be shut out entirely." ■

HITCHHIKER'S CUBA

What the country needs, above all else, is more tourists in rented Subarus

By DAVE EGGERS

ON THE ROAD OUTSIDE HAVANA, WHERE weeds grow through the train tracks, and the crumbling buildings, colors fading into a decorator's dream, alternate with wild trees and shrubs in the most gorgeous, postapocalyptic way, is where it first happened, when we first got an idea of how it all worked.

WE HAD MISSED A TURN (we suspected) and so had stopped to ask directions. We pulled over next to a median strip, on which stood eight or 10 people, half with shopping bags, presumably waiting for a bus. We rolled down the window, smiled sheepishly and directed our confusion to one of the men (tall, black, in a shiny Adidas jersey). With a swift sort of purpose, he nodded and stepped forward from the island and toward us, in a gesture we took as exceptionally friendly and helpful, getting so close to better relate the coordinates...

Then he was in the car. It happened before we knew it had happened. He just opened the door, and then suddenly he was giving us directions from within the car. The smallest

back seat was empty, then full, full with this large man, his knees cramped up near his chin. He was so nonchalant, and had not uttered any commands or taken out a gun or any of the other ostensible signs of carjacking, and so it dawned on us that this was what happened in Rome. In Cuba, that is. Here hitchhiking is custom. Hitchhiking is essential. Hitchhiking is what makes Cuba move. All those other people on the median strip? All waiting for rides. Perhaps a bus, yes, if they have a few hours to lose. But until then there are cars, and occasionally the back of a bicycle, and the hope that someone will stop. So the man in our car tells us where we're going, and then we're off, eastbound, through the outer parts of Havana, along the train tracks, more and more green, past the heart-breaking roadside propaganda, 10 miles, 15 miles out of the city's center.

His name is Juan Carlos.

And while he speaks a little English, thankfully in the passenger seat is a translator/navigator (T/N), and she duly interprets.

What does Juan Carlos do for a living?

He's a basketball player-coach.

Where are we taking him?

Home. Is that O.K.?

Of course, sure. Is he married?

Yes. Actually, he says, his wife is the starting center for the Cuban women's national basketball team. Do we want to meet her?

Hell, of course we want to meet her.

His building is a concrete complex overgrown with weeds and drying laundry. Neighbors stare from above, their arms draped over balconies. Through the door and inside Juan Carlos' apartment suddenly there is Judith, easily 7 ft. tall. Eight? She's huge. She leans down to offer her cheek for kisses. The walls are crowded with images of Michael Jordan. We say we're

from Chicago. They nod politely. Juan Carlos thinks the Suns will take it this year. The Suns? We nod politely.

Judith is practicing for the Sydney Games, with her team playing against three other teams in the Cuban women's intramural league. From the four teams, the squad for the national team is chosen. Does she think she'll have any trouble making the team? She chuckles. Dumb question. No, she'll be starting.

They ask when we'll be back in Havana. We don't know. When you come back, they say, this is your home. Their in-laws live down the street, so they'll stay with them and we can have their bed. We say fine, but for now we have to move, must get back on the road (but not before getting a quick snapshot, for which Judith changes into her uniform), because we're heading up the coast, and we have more people to pick up and move, from here to there.



Heaven for interior designers



"Despite everything, revolution"



The Malecon, con rain



Juan Carlos and Judith



That becomes the point—it had not been the plan at the outset but now is the mission, one thrust upon us—the picking up of people, because, as we learn soon enough, the most common roadside scenery in Cuba, besides the horse-drawn wagons and broken-down classic American cars, is its hitchhikers. The roads are littered with people everywhere, along the huge highways and two-laners, all strewn with mothers and their daughters, grandmothers, working men, soldiers, teenagers, schoolchildren in their white, white shirts and mustard-colored pants or skirts, day and night, in the rain or otherwise. All waiting.

They wait for hours for the occasional bus or a spot on the back of a truck, waiting on the median strips, at the intersections, sitting with their possessions or on them, along the gravelly highway shoulders, patience their essence because gasoline is scarce and expensive, cars are owned by few and function for fewer, the buses are terrible and slow and al-

ways so full. And so we are driving in our Subaru, a tiny thing but big enough for five, and we're Americans come to move the Cubans from place to place. Feel our luxury! Hear our engine's roar!

Up the coast, and in 10 minutes we stop for Jorge, who gets in at a stoplight and is going toward Varadero, a beach town on the north coast. Jorge is about 18, in khakis and a pink shirt, with a very hip-seeming haircut, freshly gelled, a kind of haircut that makes him look half monk, half member of a dancing, harmonizing teen quintet. Jorge's father, he says, left for the U.S. years ago. He was one of the so-called *balseros*, the rafters who left from the Bay of Mariel in 1994 during one of Castro's periodic spurts of permitted emigration. Now he's in Miami.

T/N: What does he do there?

Jorge: I don't know. I haven't talked to him since he left.

T/N: Oh, that's too bad.

Jorge: No, no. It's O.K. We drop the subject of

Dad of Jorge. We pass miles and miles of oil pumps along the ocean, some pumping, their bird heads rhythmically dipping their beaks, others inanimate, the surf spraying over. We ask Jorge what he does for a living. He says he's a student of astronomy.

"Oh, so what does that entail?" I ask the rear-view mirror. T/N translates.

"Oh, you know," he says. "*Cervezas, sodas, comida...*"

Oh. Ha. Not astronomy. Gastronomy. Big laughs all around. The sky is watercolor gray, and the clouds hold rain. We all go over the mix-up three more times. Not astronomy. Gastronomy. Yes. The beach comes into view, palm trees bent by a wicked ocean-borne wind. Jorge wants to know if we need some place to stay. Jorge, like every last man in Cuba, knows of just the place, the perfect *casa particular*—the Cuban version of a bed and breakfast—and he, like most, is very difficult to convince of one's lack of *casa particular*-based need.

No thanks, we say.

I know just the place, he says.

No thanks, we say.

Very nice place.

No thanks but—

Clean, very cheap.

Thanks, no.

Have your own kitchen, very private.

No, no.

Only \$18.

You are too kind but—

You want me to show you?

We drop Jorge at the beach at Santa Maria del Mar and get back to moving down the coast. Minutes later we pull over for two girls, each carrying a cake, each about 20, giggling to themselves in the back seat. Sisters? No, just friends. They're on their way home, to the next town, Guanabo. We pass a photo shoot, by the water: a skeletal blond woman, a photographer, a band of Cuban men, grinning in matching shirts, all standing in front of a mid-'50s Chevy, powder blue. We all wonder who the model is. Anyone we know? The girls giggle more. We're suddenly pals, they and all hitchhikers instantly familiar, completely at ease—as



if we've picked up classmates on the way to the mini-mart. Safety here is assumed, trust a given. Where is there danger in Cuba? This is unclear.

Sand covers the road. We almost get blindsided by a mural-burdened van from Pastors for Peace. Bumper stickers thereon: *END THE EMBARGO!* *¡VAMOS Á CUBA!* Terrible drivers, these guys.

We drop the cake-bearing girls on the corner just past Guanabo's main drag and pick up a much older woman, 60 or so, who's been visiting her mother and needs to go just a little ways out of town. Ten minutes later—*¡Aquí, Aquí!*—she gets out. She smiles thank-you, and we smile goodbye—and again we're empty. We don't like to be empty. Through the Cuban countryside we feel ashamed to have the back seat unpeopled—all this room we have, all this fuel. It's getting dark, and as the roads go black, what was a steady supply of hitchhikers, punctuating the roads like mile markers, quickly disappears. Where they go is unclear. What happens when night comes but a ride hasn't? It's a problem of basic math we

cannot fathom: always there are more riders than rides, a 10-to-1 ratio at best, so what are the odds that all riders will be transported before sunset?

At Varadero, there is money. Resorts and busloads of European tourists waiting impatiently in lobbies for their bags to be ported to their private beachside cabanas. There are buffets and games of water polo organized in the main pool—a ridiculous sort of comfort level for about \$100 a night. (Best yet, the help is obsequious and a 50¢ tip would do just fine!) After being turned away at the daunting gates of the massive Club Med, we drop our luggage next door and set out to the area's most fiery hot spot, the Café Havana, a huge disco/Hard Rock-style fun provider. The place is overflowing with tourists from around the world, come to see how the Cubans entertain.

We sit at a table by the stage, and after some fantastic salsa-dancing action—women wearing little beyond sequins and feathers—there is a magician, ponytailed, with two ponytailed assistants. And this magician's specialty is doves.

Everywhere he is making doves appear. From his sleeve, a dove. From a newspaper, a dove. A balloon is popped, and a dove appears and flaps wildly. The crowd loves it. The doves appear, each one flailing its wings for a few seconds of chaos and quasi-freedom. Then the magician, with fluid nonchalance, grabs the dove from the air, two-handed, making from the explosion of feathery white a smooth inanimate sculpture of a bird. Then in one swift motion he shoves the dove into a small cage, with little steel bars, on a stand by his waist. Once inside, the doves sit docilely, staring ahead through the tiny silver bars. Though there is a hole just behind them, they sit, cooing—one dove, then two, three, four, five, six, all in a row. When he is done, the magician is applauded. We all love him. The birds in their cage, content and so pretty. How does he do it? He is fantastic. Then the band comes on, and everyone dances.

The next day we're off, Varadero to Cienfuegos. First passengers, from a roadside crowd of 15 or 20: a mother-and-child duo, the mother skinny and

snaggle-toothed, the baby perfect and in pink, 11 months old, little black shoes, shiny; they're headed home. We roll with them past horse-drawn wagons and slow, lanky cows. Egrets skim over the road, perpendicular. Air warm, sky overcast. The car screams.

They get out near Jovellanos, and we never get their names. In Jovellanos, a medium-size adobe town of narrow streets, we get lost, quickly and irrevocably. At a street corner, there appears beside us a man on a bicycle. He knows where to go, he says—just follow him. We rumble behind him and his bike at 15 m.p.h., the streets full of onlookers watching our parade—left turn, right, left, left, right, left, 10 minutes and there we are, back on the main road. He points ahead, toward the on-ramp. Aha.

We pull up next to him. He is sweating profusely and grinning. We slip him \$5—for many, we're told, that's almost a month's salary—because we are wealthy and glamorous Americans and we appreciate his help. So easy to change the quality, the very direction, of Cubans' lives! It seems pos-



Doorway from a colonial past



Doric columns in Jovellanos



Ionic in Havana



This is just a nice picture

sible that, between our ride sharing and tip giving, we can single-handedly redress whatever harm has been done. Oh, if only!

Just outside Jovellanos there's Estelle, chatty, about 35, and her 10-year-old Javier, who jump in at a dusty corner. Estelle sighs and laughs as she gets in and says hello. Had they been waiting long? Yes, yes, she says, they'd been waiting an hour and a half. They're going to a town called Australia, 20 minutes away. "Why is there a town in Cuba called Australia?" we ask. Estelle doesn't know. She turns to Javier. Javier has no idea. She shrugs and smiles.

We dodge more wagons, their drivers frequently asleep, the donkeys as sad as donkeys

we're going, to Playa Giron, home of the Cuban monument to the heroes of the Bay of Pigs. Our merengue tape, bought at a gas station, tinkles quietly from the speakers. We offer them—we offer everyone—water, cookies, crackers. They decline, and like most riders, this family says nothing unless we speak first; they don't even talk to one another. They watch the countryside pass, content. We are surprised, with them and most riders, that they do not want to know where we're from. Why are they not curious about us, the Americans here to save them? At their house, a bent-over salmon-colored ranch on a brown-dirt street, they ask us if we'd like to come in for a cold drink. We decline, must

course. They want to siphon from our tank. They have an actual siphon right there. We don't have enough, we say, noticing that we're almost out ourselves. We'll take them to the next town. Another man, Esteban, about 19, gets in the back seat, as does Marisa, 24, petite, in silk blouse and black jeans. They hold the gas container on their laps. It's 15 minutes to tiny-town Roda and its one-pump gas station.

As we wait, we talk to Marisa, who we learn is studying English; she wants to get into tourism. She is married to an American, a photographer from Los Angeles. She was just coming back from Havana, as a matter of fact, where she was seeing him off at the airport.

then boom, Esteban pops the clutch and the Subaru whinies and I get in while it's moving and we're off, Esteban at the wheel. Like a getaway car! In a minute Esteban's doing 80 m.p.h. He's veering on and off the road. "¡Flojo! ¡Flojo!" Marisa is saying, urging him to slow down, but young Esteban has something to prove to her and to T/N, so 80 it is, the engine hitting high notes with full vibrato.

We get to the taxi. They fill up the Volvo while we wait. We meet the third passenger, Dale, an English-speaking med student from St. Kitts, who decides he's sick of speaking Spanish, so he'll ride to Cienfuegos with us. He's studying Spanish there, the first year of



This shade of blue: everywhere



San Antonio de los Baños



A-1: outside Sancti Spiritus



Bus stop (as last resort only)

insist on appearing. There are men in uniform waiting for rides. There are women with groceries and babies waiting for rides. Some of the hitchhikers raise their hands to a passing car, but most don't. Some express frustration when they feel that a passing car could fit more people (i.e., them), but most don't. Most just watch you pass, squinting beyond you, for the next slowing car or truck. But when a car stops, never is there competition for the ride. Never is there shoving or even the most mild sort of disagreement. Each time we pull over, whoever's closest simply walks to the car and gets in. There is no system in place for the rewarding of longest wait, or oldest, or most pregnant. It's both perfectly fair and completely random.

We drop Estelle and Javier in Australia and pick up a family just outside of town. Grandfather, mother, daughter. They had been visiting a friend at the hospital and are going where

move. They scoot out. In the process, the daughter's shoe catches on the seat and loses its heel. She looks up, embarrassed, horrified. "New shoes too," says Mom. We all chuckle and then sigh. Kids.

After Giron, we're headed to Cienfuegos, through more fields of tobacco, then bananas. When night comes again, there are no streetlights, no lights anywhere, and on the winding two-lane roads, the avoidance of donkey carts and tractors and people requires tremendous, arcade-like hand-eye coordination. All is dark, and then things will suddenly be in front of us, lit as if by a camera's flash; swerving is an essential skill. Up ahead a car is parked, hazards blinking. There is a group of people around the car. Obviously an ambush. We should not stop. In the U.S., we would not stop.

We stop. Four people are standing around a white, early-'70s Volvo. They're out of gas; can we help? Yes, yes, we say, of

course. So who are the others in the car?

She doesn't know. It's a taxi.

A taxi? A taxi running out of gas?

Big laughs all around. The taxi was taking three passengers the three hours from Havana to Cienfuegos; the driver had grossly miscalculated how much fuel that would require. They had left at 3 that afternoon. It was now at least 9. We fill up their container and are ready to go.

But the Subaru won't start. It won't even turn over. In a flash, Esteban is out of the car and pushing. I'm driving, and he's barking orders, which need to be translated instantaneously by T/N. I have no idea what we're doing. We stop. Esteban, sighing loudly, takes my place, and then I'm pushing. Down the road, and before long we're out of the town and into the dark fields. The road is red from the taillights and slippery and I can't get a grip, but

seven he'll spend in Cuba on his way to a medical degree. We follow the taxi into Cienfuegos, drop off Dale at his barbed wire-surrounded dormitory, check into a hotel with red light bulbs and a lounge singer plowing through the high points of the Billy Joel songbook, and we're done for the night.

In the morning, on the way to the town of Trinidad, it's all rolling hills and farms, and the people have been waiting for us. At an intersection 10 miles out of Cienfuegos we stop at a gathering of 20 or so, mostly young men, some in uniform. One gets in, followed by a woman, running—she's just jumped out of another car and into ours. Her name is Maela and, like the vast majority of Cuban women, Maela is a devout spandex enthusiast. She's in a black-and-white bodysuit, bisected with belt, and she's laughing like mad at her car-tor-coup, the soldiers tossing her a wide variety of obscene



gestures as we drive away. The soldier we've got is named Jordan; he's doing the mandatory military service—two years—and is heading home for the weekend. Maela was in Cienfuegos with friends and is going home too. He's quiet, but she's bubbly, and through the countryside we roll.

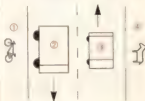
Ten miles and Jordan gets out at a tiny town called Pepito, where Condela gets in. Condela is about 45 and has crumbs all over his mouth and hands—he has been eating a pastry while waiting for a ride, standing just outside a bakery. He's a butcher in Trinidad, so he'll be with us the rest of the ride, about an hour more. Condela has been visiting friends and is on his way back home. He asks where we're from. Los Estados Unidos, we say. Ah, he says. He has family in Miami. (Everyone has family in Miami.)

We drop off Maela; she giggles thanks, and in comes Belgis, about 40, pregnant, in a white frilly blouse and floral spandex leggings. She was waiting for three hours. She was visiting her family, and is on her way to Playa Yaguardo to see her in-laws, 10 min-

utes up the road. We get there, and she's out. Condela stays put and seems perturbed—the back seat is not so big—when we welcome a young couple, Alexander and Yaineris, who bustle in, exhaling with relief. They have a chicken with them. A live chicken. Condela laughs at our surprise. The chicken is small and in a plastic bag—its red, confused little head poking out. Alexander and Yaineris are married, and have been visiting her parents; they're headed back home to Trinidad. The ocean is a few hills to our right. Tour buses whip past us doing 75 m.p.h. The tour buses are always empty, always doing 75, and they don't stop for anyone.

Halfway to Trinidad, while we are passing La Güira, something recklessly symbolic happens. At the bottom of a small valley, there is a split second when a huge, bulbous green army truck passes us, heading in the other direction. At the same instant, we are passing on our right a straw-hatted farmer on horseback and, to our left, a woman on a bicycle. Symbolism contained: each of our vehicles represents a different el-

ement of what makes Cuba Cuba. The bicycle ① is the Cubans' resourcefulness and symbiosis with their communist brethren (about a million bikes were donated by the Chinese, decades ago). The army



truck ② is the constant (though relatively sedate and casual, we'd say) military presence. We are the tourists ③, perhaps the future, our dollars feeding into Cuba's increasingly dominant second economy, largely inaccessible to Cuba's proletariat; and the horseback farmer ④ represents, of course, the country's rural backbone. All caught, for one split second, on a single linear plane.

Fun!

At Trinidad, a colonial town 400 years old, sun bleached and ravishing, we drop off Condela. He shows us his shop, right on

the main cobblestone drag. "If you need anything," he says, pointing to a storefront, "I'm right here." Trinidad is much too perfectly aged and brilliantly colored to be free of tourists: Germans, Spanish, Italians, even a few Americans drawing Indiana's.

On to Sancti Spiritus. Carlos, about 30, and Armena, 25, get in just outside Trinidad, where three dozen others are waiting with them. Carlos works in construction now, after a five-year stint as a policeman in Havana. Armena has been in Trinidad looking for work.

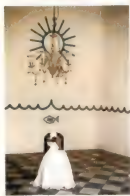
"What kind of work?"

"Anything at all," she says.

"Is it hard to find work?"

Eyes are rolled. Yes, yes.

These days, yes. We drop off Armena at a little yellow house, clothes hanging in the windows. Carlos gets out soon after. At Banao, a tiny town, there is a crowd of 40 waiting; a dozen or so people wave us down. We can't stop right in the middle—too confusing. (Oh, to have a bus!) We drive to the end, where the throng thins. We nod to a woman, and she jogs forward and gets in.



In Trinidad, a scary doll ...



... a forbidding door ...



... a cobblestone street ...



... and a bright red tractor

Dayami is about 30, lipstick, in tight black jeans with a black mesh shirt over a sports bra. She's a doctor, on her way to pick up her daughter at school. We ask if it's hard to get medicine. After all, on the way from Havana, a billboard had read: YANKEE EMBARGO: GENOCIDE AGAINST CUBA. She says no, not really.

We pass a barefoot, shirtless boy on the back of a donkey. A mile later, a man on horseback, galloping, beams as we go by, takes his hat off and waves it to us in mid-gallop, even as we're passing him going 65 m.p.h. Is Cuba cinematic? It is.

At a corner outside the city, we grab a tallish, red-haired woman in a white medical jacket. When she gets in, she and

"Cuban couples won't pick people up," she says. "People in groups or driving alone but never couples."

(Shoulder poke) "iMira": she has family in New York, New Jersey.

(Shoulder poke) "iMira": she also cleans houses, to make ends meet.

(Shoulder poke) "iMira": "You know how the situation in Cuba is, right?"

She's on her way home. Her husband's in prison, she says—she has just been visiting him. He was convicted, with nine others, of stealing gasoline. He was originally sentenced to four years, but with a lawyer—he is innocent, was set up, she insists—he was able to get the sentence reduced to 20

on the Malecon, just shy of the Hemingway Marina. She's coming home from school; she's a business and law student. We're in the suburbs of Havana, and the sky is purplish and getting darker as we approach the city's center. Yuricema claims that her English is bad, but then she speaks it, and it's kind of perfect, at least in terms of the words she does know. The accent sounds more California than Havana. We ask her where she learned English.

"My professor was Michael Bolton," she says.

I almost veer off the road.

"Michael Bolton?" T/N says.

"Yes, yes, he is very good. I love him."



The Malecon, from above



Catholic procession, Old Havana



Positive reinforcement

Dayami laugh. They used to work together, and begin chatting. She's a dentist, and had loaned her bike to a friend. We drop Dayami off at her daughter's school and park in Sancti Spiritus' central square. A school band practices in an auditorium above us. Mopeds buzz to and fro, soldiers talk to schoolchildren, and within minutes we see the dentist. She rides by on her bicycle and rings her bell. "I got my bike back!" she sings to us. Cuba has become one huge Richard Scarry neighborhood.

Then we're off to Santa Clara, too dark to pick up anyone, but the next day it's Santa Clara to Havana, and en route there is Wendy. Wendy is talkative and insists on tapping T/N on the shoulder and saying "iMira!" (Look here!) every time she has a question or statement. She's married, has a three-year-old, works at a peso food market. "Oh, I knew you weren't Cuban," she says. Why? we ask.

months. She gets out and is replaced by a cheerful trio—a large blond woman, her sister and her sister's daughter. Havana? they ask. Yes, yes. Oh, they cannot believe their luck. They cannot believe they're getting a ride all the way to Havana. Waiting long? Hours. Are things always like this? Getting worse every year. Castro, they say, is getting too old, senile maybe. Things are not good. Are we aware of the situation here? Things are getting worse. The past 10 years, they say, much worse. Fidel is obsessed with the U.S., they say, which is fine, but he must start taking care of things here at home. When we drop them off, at about noon, they're astounded that they're home before nightfall. They are beside themselves. When we're in Cuba again, they tell us, we have a home, we have a family. We take pictures.

And finally, there is Yuricema. About 20, dark brown skin, wide white smile. She gets in

Is it possible? Was Michael Bolton ever a teacher of English in Cuba? We hit the main drag of the Malecon. The ocean is bursting against the wall, spraying the waves up and over the road, 30 ft. high. It's almost dark. T/N wants one more shot at it.

"So, wait, Michael Bolton was your English teacher?"

Yuricema bursts out laughing. We laugh too. She asks T/N the English word for "¡Ojala!" T/N translates, "I wish!"

She had been trying to say "My preference is Michael Bolton" but said instead "My professor is..." She had one of his albums, but she loaned it to a friend, and then he claimed never to have seen it. Yuricema rolls her eyes to underline how stupid her friend is. We offer to send her a new Michael Bolton tape. I throw in that we'll send her whatever Michael Bolton stuff we can find. Posters, books, everything. "Very easy," I say. So easy to send wonderful things from America! She is be-

side herself. She gives T/N a pre-emptive gift—a wallet-size plastic calendar featuring an advertisement for a new kind of Vaseline. We thank her. I picture the sending of the Bolton care package. She will be so happy. She will never forget us. No one will ever forget us. Cuba will not forget us. We will come back, with not only the Michael Bolton stuff but a bigger car. No, a fleet of cars—and buses. We will sneak into the country from America, this time with legions of drivers—there are more of us coming all the time; it's getting so easy, embargo or no—and with enough buses and cars to get everyone everywhere they need to go. With our dollars and new tires, we will empty



A gift from Yuricema

the roadsides and move the people place to place. The cars and buses will be huge and shiny, and we will flood the roads with them, get this place going—faster and faster, no more waiting for anything. Cars for everyone! We'll bring in some trains maybe. Hovercrafts, monorails. It'll be great. And all we'll ask in return is some hearty thanks and a nice beach to enjoy when we're in the neighborhood.

We wind our way through the dark streets of Old Havana, as Yuricema directs us to her home. When we get there we realize she lives a block from our hotel, the Hambos Mundos, a bargain at \$120 a night. She gets out of the car and asks if we'd like to come in. We decline. She smiles.

"Don't forget me," Yuricema says, getting out and backing into her doorway. "Because I will never forget you."

Oh, just you wait, Yuricema. You haven't seen the last of us. ■

The End of His Season

A football player tries to outrun charges that he conspired to kill his girlfriend—and unborn son

By NADYA LABI

THIS WAS TO BE RAE CARRUTH'S BREAKOUT season. The first-round NFL draft pick for the Carolina Panthers hadn't lived up to the promise he showed in 1997, when he led the league's rookie wide-outs with 44 catches and 545 receiving yards. First, a broken foot kept him out for nearly all of the 1998 season; then he was sidelined by a sprained ankle in October. By last week, the only running the 25-year-old wide receiver could do was a graceless flight from charges that he conspired to murder his 6½-months-pregnant girlfriend.

Cherica Adams, 24, was gunned down Nov. 16 while driving her black BMW in a tony neighborhood of Charlotte, N.C. It was after midnight when, according to police, she came under fire from a drive-by car with three passengers. She was hit in the neck, chest and abdomen, but managed to call 911, surviving long enough to apparently finger Carruth, who is believed to be the baby's father. Rushed to the hospital, she later delivered her son by emergency C-section. Last week she died. The football player was arrested and released on \$3 million bond, but he jumped bail last week and fled to Wildersville, Tenn. His female companion led FBI agents to where he was hiding, in the trunk of her gray Toyota Camry parked at a Best Western motel.

Carruth was not one of the three men—Stanley Abraham, Michael Kennedy and

William Watkins—believed to be in the car from which shots were fired. But Kennedy's attorney, James Exum, tells TIME that throughout the attack, Carruth was driving his white Ford Expedition directly in front of Adams' car while talking by cell phone to Watkins, whom Kennedy has named as the gunman. And a homeowner in the neighborhood where the wounded woman stopped her car says he overheard Adams telling the police that her "boyfriend" had shot her. "Her composure and ability to talk with us were amazing considering the way she was hurt," says police spokesman Keith Bridges. But could Carruth possibly have been capable of what some speculate was a crime of the coldest calculus—murder to avoid paying child support? Surely his weekly salary of \$38,000 could cover that expense in addition to the \$3,500 a month he was contributing to support a son in Sacramento, Calif.

Carruth is an enigmatic personality, friends say, reserved to the point of being reclusive. "He might not seem that friendly, but he had a good personality," says Matt Russell, a Detroit Lions linebacker who was Carruth's teammate at the University of Colorado. He recalls that Carruth, who majored in English, shied away from bars, preferring to read or attend the theater. Carruth also avoided the media, often refusing to give any interviews. "In our family, an empty wagon makes the most noise," says his mother Theodry Carruth, explaining his quiet de-

meanor. She claims he was ready to turn himself in but "fled because he got poor legal advice and he was scared." The Panthers took a harsher view of Carruth's actions and released him. "This thing is beyond football," says coach George Seifert. "Look at the lives that have been destroyed."

Evidence links Carruth to the other suspects. Abraham's attorney, James Gronquist, says Carruth and Kennedy struck up an acquaintance at a tire shop after noticing they had the same rims on their tires. And according to Kennedy's attorney, Carruth was hanging out with both suspects on the evening of Nov. 15.

Just after the attack, Carruth visited the hospital where Adams was taken. Was he acting as any concerned boyfriend and father might? Or was he checking to see whether the job had been successful? Carruth could face the death penalty if convicted. Cherica Adams' baby boy, in the meantime, is in stable condition. He'll be raised by Adams' mother. —Reported by

Maureen Harrington/Denver, Susan Kuchinskas/Oakland and Sylvester Monroe/Charlotte

DOWNFALL: A standout rookie for the Panthers in 1997, Carruth was later sidelined by injuries. Now he has been released by the team

A WIDE RECEIVER THROWN FOR A BIG LOSS



Adams was pregnant when she was mortally wounded in a drive-by shooting. She may have led police to Carruth, shown here after his arrest in Tennessee



Ending the Whitewash

The N.A.A.C.P. cried boycott to grab TV's attention on race, but quiet diplomacy may get more results

By RON STODGHILL

FOR DECADES NOW, ESPECIALLY IN THE past couple of years, black actors have complained about being snubbed for starring roles on TV. So after the TV networks announced their fall lineups last spring, Kweisi Mfume arrived in Hollywood with his own script proposal. The N.A.A.C.P. president cast himself as the leading man, a swaggering yet politically correct Terminator of all things racist about Tinseltown. His first mission: to strong-arm the networks into hiring more minorities to work in front of and behind the cameras. Mfume's early salvos had the fire of civil rights rhetoric of the '60s, as he railed against the "virtual whitewash" on network TV. In private he was just as confrontational. "I don't like this diplomacy s---," he whispered to an aide before a meeting with cas Entertainment president Leslie Moonves in August. "We should just bring out the picket signs, bar the doors, get arrested and make the 6 o'clock news."

Mfume didn't get arrested, but he got the attention he wanted. The N.A.A.C.P.'s campaign to rectify the color balance in network TV has made headlines for months, most recently when representatives of three of the four major networks walked out of an N.A.A.C.P. "diversity hearing" on Nov. 29. (They were unhappy at being denied the microphone for hours following the testimony of Moonves, the only network top dog to show up.) But for all the verbal grenades fired, the N.A.A.C.P. campaign has sort of stumbled along. A network boycott originally planned for November was postponed, while some within the N.A.A.C.P. leadership grumbled privately that Mfume's first high-profile campaign since taking the organization's helm in 1996 was ill-conceived.

Still, the campaign is about to bear at least some fruit. Following a series of meetings between network chiefs and N.A.A.C.P. officials in Baltimore over the past couple of weeks, the four networks are close to an agreement to implement a series of diversity initiatives, while the N.A.A.C.P. has all

but dropped its boycott threat. Mfume seems to have realized that old-line civil rights tactics of boycotts and picket lines hold less sway on the Left Coast than power lunches and air kisses. What finally worked was the same back-room conciliatory politics that made Mfume a force on Capitol Hill for a decade. "Network TV will never again look like it did this fall," Mfume told *TIME* in an interview. "We're winning on this issue

spending for minority shows"; and to appoint at least one new African American to its board of directors by Sept. 1, 2000. Some of the goals are vague and difficult to enforce, like a provision that the networks "cease any practice of ghettoizing 'black shows' where-by they are scheduled together on nights without white programming." That flies in the face of longtime programming principles of "audience flow"—scheduling shows that appeal to similar audiences together. Nor can the agreement force the networks to keep low-rated shows on the air or force advertisers to pay high rates for commercial time on them. While studies show that blacks watch far more television than non-blacks—about 70.4 hours a week and 50.2 hours, respectively—advertisers remain unwilling to pay premium rates for black-oriented shows that often have little crossover appeal.

Still, the diversity campaign has already achieved a good deal by highlighting a problem that grew too blatant to ignore this season. Of the 26 new fall shows announced by the networks, none featured an African American, Latino or Asian American in a leading role. When the N.A.A.C.P. complained, the network honchos admitted the problem and began scrambling to add minority roles. NBC's *ER* brought on a black woman doctor and an Asian medical student, for example, while CBS's new series *Judging Amy* tossed in a black bailiff.

The diversity agreement would signal a major effort to go beyond such quick fixes. It would also score a much needed victory for the N.A.A.C.P., which has spent much of the past decade dogged by financial woes, an embarrassing sex scandal and a dimmed place on the national political radar. Mfume, 51, has been lauded for putting the organization back on solid financial footing and increasing its sagging membership rolls. But he has been criticized for failing to steer the organization into such controversial issues as affirmative action and welfare reform.

Diversity on TV is not exactly a front-burner issue for many African Americans either. And it's likely that Mfume will face some grumbling from civil rights old-liners that any goodwill covenant with the networks that lacks enforcement teeth is not worth much. But Mfume may wind up having more impact by playing the Negotiator than the Terminator. ■

Midwest bureau chief Ron Stodghill was co-author of *Mfume's 1996 memoir No Free Ride*



GOING HOLLYWOOD: Mfume, right, at the Image Awards in March, needs a victory in his first big initiative as N.A.A.C.P. chief



IN LIVING COLOR: ABC's *Wasteland* added a black character (and was later canceled); CBS's new *City of Angels* has a black cast

in a way most people thought impossible."

Whether it is seen as a win or a weak compromise remains to be seen. The pact, *TIME* has learned, does not set any quotas for minority representation either in front of or behind the cameras. But it does lay out ambitious goals in some 30 areas where the networks can improve opportunities for minorities. For example, it requires each network to establish a recruitment program for minority managers and writers; to "make every effort to increase its promotional

We're obsessed with it, and never seem to have enough. But scientists don't know how to explain it—or even if it really exists



EARLY TIME This 18th century device tracked the planet's orbit

NIGHTTIME
This late-17th century gadget used stars to mark the hours of darkness



THE RIDDLE OF TIME

By MICHAEL D. LEMONICK

SOMETIMES IT FLIES, SOMETIMES it crawls, but it always passes inexorably. We mark it, save it, waste it, bide it, race against it. We measure it incessantly, with a passion for precision that borders on the obsessive. Time is so vitally enmeshed with the fabric of our existence, in fact, that it's hard even to conceive of it as an independent entity—and when we try, the result is less than enlightening. Pondering the mystery of what time really is, St. Augustine wrote in his *Confessions*, "If no one asks me, I know; but if any person should require me to tell him, I cannot."

Indeed, while scientists have harnessed the power of the atom, cracked the genetic code and probed the very edges of the universe, they still don't understand time much better than St. Augustine did. Yet now, as the last few days of the second millennium tick rapidly away (though diehard purists still insist it doesn't really end for another year), we seem more fascinated with the subject than ever. At the Royal Observatory at Greenwich, England, crowds are flocking to a new exhibition, "The Story of Time," which examines time from cultural, reli-



AMERICAN TIME A Connecticut firm created this stylish clock in about 1850

gious, artistic and scientific viewpoints. On this side of the Atlantic, the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History has opened a permanent show on America's fascination with time. In bookstores, best-sell-

ing author James Gleick's *Faster* (Pantheon), which laments the accelerating pace of our lives, will be joined next month by *The End of Time* (Oxford University Press). British physicist Julian Barbour's treatise on the idea that time doesn't even exist. It's nothing more, he says, than an illusion; a sort of cosmic parlor trick.

If so, it's an illusion that has appeared in very different guises to different groups. Says Greenwich observatory director Kristen Lippencott, who put together the British exhibition: "Time is not the thing on our wrists. Time is a cultural object." For many outside the Western European tradition, for instance, time is a circle that turns on a daily, yearly and even a cosmic scale. The Hindu concept of reincarnation is perhaps the most familiar example, but the Hopi in the American Southwest and the Inuit in the Arctic also look at the world as a series of repeating cycles with no beginning or end; so, traditionally, did the Chinese and Japanese cultures.

In the Judeo-Christian West, however, time is a line, marching steadily from the past to the future. As Lippencott puts it,

GLICK: WISE FROM TOP: MUSEE D'HISTOIRE DES SCIENCES, SOLE DE GENÈVE, SCIENCE MUSEUM, LONDON—SCIENCE & SOCIETY PICTURE LIBRARY; GLEICK: WISE FROM TOP: MUSEE D'HISTOIRE DES SCIENCES, SOLE DE GENÈVE, SCIENCE MUSEUM, LONDON—SCIENCE & SOCIETY PICTURE LIBRARY

MUSIC TIME

This early-19th-century metronome belonged to Ludwig van Beethoven



TIME BUCKET

Egyptian clocks circa 1400 B.C. measured hours drop by drop

Time is not the thing on our wrist. Time is a cultural object. ⁷ KRISTEN LIPPENCOTT, director of the Royal Observatory

POCKET TIME
Designer Oliver Marsh built this model for a watch in about 1850



"God never moves backward." Deward Walker, an anthropologist at the University of Colorado, Boulder, argues that this way of viewing time is "part of the reason we have such an advanced science, technology and economy, such mastery of nature and dominance of the universe."

Technology, in turn, has led to our obsession with ultraprecise timekeeping and time management. Before the Industrial Revolution, the exact time of day or year mattered only to those in specialized jobs, such as astrologers and sailors. For the rest, the day began at dawn, noon was when the sun was highest in the sky, and sunset wrapped things up. Says Carleen Stephens, who curated the Smithsonian show, in 1790 fewer than 10% of Americans had a clock of any kind in their homes, and most of those had no minute hand.

Then came trains and factories, and with them the need to coordinate the schedules of hundreds and even thousands of people. It was the railroad companies that invented time zones, in 1883. Because of the earth's rotation, the sun was highest at different times in New York City and, say, Washington, which lay a bit farther west. The 11-min. difference in local noon could lead to disaster at intersections.

Factories, meanwhile, required workers to begin their days together: it's no coincidence that inexpensive alarm clocks and wristwatches began appearing at the end of the 1800s. "In the 19th century," says historian Michael O'Malley, author of *Keeping Watch: A History of American Time*, "we were urged to merge our sense of time with mechanical devices. It allowed for new forms of social organization."

It also led to a vicious cycle. Once factory owners realized that time was money—a notion that led to the first so-called efficiency experts in the 1920s—the idea of making every second count began to spread through society. Result: efficiency became an American virtue. Today every conceivable business is open around the clock; we multitask frantically, applying makeup or talking on the phone while driving; we cram our kids' lives with team sports and lessons. Children don't play anymore: they schedule play dates. "We are," says author Gleick, "driven by time."

Technology continues to make things worse. Before digital clocks and watches became common, people rounded to the nearest five minutes when telling each other the time: now we give the exact minute. Before cell phones and faxes and answering machines, we accepted being out of touch. Before the Internet, we didn't feel entitled (much less obliged) to shop or do research or work around the clock.

Technology also demands that time be

measured ever more precisely. An accurate mechanical clock proved to be so valuable to the British maritime industry in the eighteenth century that the government awarded a hefty prize to its inventor, Joseph Harrison (a story elegantly told in Dava Sobel's 1995 best seller *Longitude*).

But such a timepiece would be virtually useless today: computers, communications satellites, global-positioning receivers and telephone-switching systems need a precision beyond anything conceivable even 50 years ago. Time technology long since abandoned mechanical devices and even the hum of quartz crystals. For true precision—accuracy to a billionth of a second—you need to travel, virtually at least, to a place like the perfectly circular, well-guarded park that sits in northwest



CHINESE TIME This water-powered clock from 1088 was ordered up by the Emperor

Washington. There, on the grounds of the U.S. Naval Observatory, a nondescript concrete building houses the nerve center of the U.S. Directorate of Time.

Behind its barred windows sit 28 atomic clocks, four of them holding atoms of hydrogen and the rest cesium. When excited by lasers or irradiated with microwaves, the atoms begin to dance with an utterly regular vibration that's monitored by computer. Once each second, the results are fed into America's Master Clock; the measurements from this and similar clocks around the world are sent to the International Bureau of Weights and Measures outside Paris—the ultimate timekeeping authority. It is there, next Friday, that the pulsing of billions of atoms will officially signal that civilization's odometer has turned over from 1999 to 2000.

Yet even the most accurate clock in the world can't answer the question of what all these atoms are actually measuring. What is time anyway? According to Isaac Newton, both space and time were fixed attrib-

utes of the universe, a God-given stage on which events unfolded. But Albert Einstein torpedoed that idea with his theories of special and general relativity: the only thing that's fixed in the cosmos, he showed, is the speed of light.

Everything else—including space and time, which he melded into a single entity called space-time—is relative, as malleable as rubber. The Big Bang theory further established that space-time came into existence at a definite point in the past. Talking about what happened "before" the Big Bang is meaningless—as absurd as talking about what lies north of the North Pole.

This elasticizing of space-time means, for example, that observers might disagree over which of two events happened first—and both could be right. Even more bizarrely, physicists including Stephen Hawking have seriously discussed the possibility that relativity might make it feasible (though not with any technology we know of today) to send objects backward in time.

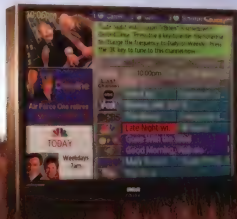
Does that mean you could go back, kill your own grandfather and keep yourself from being born—a seeming absurdity? Maybe not, say some physicists. In one interpretation of quantum physics, the world splits at each moment into an infinite number of universes that proceed in parallel; if you killed your grandfather, it might be in an alternate universe, so it would have no effect on the universe you inhabit.

Quantum physics demolishes the conventional concept of time in its own peculiar ways. Measured at short enough durations, space-time loses its apparently smooth, continuous structure, devolving into what Princeton physicist John Wheeler calls "quantum foam." The orderly flow of events may really be as much an illusion as the flickering frames of a movie. And according to independent physicist Barbour's new book, even the apparent sequence of the flickers is illusory.

It gets even worse. In some versions of M theory—the latest rage in physics, which attempts to meld relativity and quantum theory—there may be more than three dimensions of space and more than one dimension of time. What does that mean? Even the experts have no clue. "We're trying to understand it," says Harvard theorist Cumrun Vafa. "It's quite mysterious."

For physicists, then, time is an exceedingly complex and slippery concept. No wonder St. Augustine couldn't explain it. But when the month, the year, the century and the millennium end next week, it's a fair bet that theoretical physicists, like the rest of us, will be partying to welcome in the year 2000—whether it really exists or not.

—Reported by Mairi Brahmi/London and Dick Thompson/Washington



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COMICS

The Good and the Grief

Charles Schulz's *Peanuts*, about to retire after five decades, made loneliness and anxiety funny

By JAMES PONIEWOZIK



IT SEEMS ONLY APPROPRIATE that cartoonist Charles M. Schulz, 77 and recently diagnosed with colon cancer, should decide to retire *Peanuts* in winter. It's the setting of so many of the strips (the last daily one will appear Jan. 3) and the season that best captures his graceful art and playful yet melancholy spirit. Perhaps it's because the lyrical, jazz-inflected animated special *A Charlie Brown Christmas* remains Yuletide TV's high point after 34 years. Perhaps it's because the snowscapes of Schulz's youth in Minnesota, America's Scandinavia, were the most evocative setting for his wry, unsentimental, slightly Bergmanesque take on childhood's pleasures and cruelties—a season of chilly beauty, ice skating and snowballs in the back of the head.

Or perhaps it is just that his protagonist, persistent Every-loser Charlie Brown, has for nearly 50 years appeared to suffer from seasonal affective disorder. Before *Peanuts* made its de-

but in 1950, one wouldn't generally think of pop-cultural children—maybe not children, period—as having psyches, much less diagnoses. Moppets of the Depression and before were uncomplicated, hardy imps, ravenous Little Rascals and ruddy-faced Katzenjammers of simple wants and slapstick antics. Schulz's Dr. Spock-era kids brought cartoons into the age of psychiatric help, 5¢ at a time. Reflective, neurotic and deadpan, they were to their predecessors what Bob Newhart was to Moe Howard. They were children of postwar prosperity, a time when Americans could afford to have anxieties instead of fears. They played Beethoven; they parked in front of the TV; they cradled security blankets. (They played baseball too, but they weren't exactly good at it.) Our Gang could have taken them without breaking a sweat.

The closest thing to a red-blooded, extroverted American youth Schulz created was a beagle. Not coincidentally, *Peanuts*

CARTOON CAMUS: Schulz has drawn each *Peanuts* himself since he created it in 1950

hit superstardom after Snoopy adopted his World War I flying-ace persona, zooming into the lucrative blue yonder of endorsements and licensing. Snoopy electric toothbrushes and snack cakes—there's a little Woodstock in every Pikachu under your tree this year. And yet Schulz's Christmas special is a plea against commercialism, in which Charlie Brown nurses a desiccated Christmas tree (twig, really) to health.

With that theme of loving losers—even Charlie Brown's baseball idol, Joe Shlabotnik, was the worst player in the pros—came the corollary, losing at love. Every major character has an unrequited love—Charlie Brown and the little red-haired girl, Lucy and Schroeder, Linus and Miss Othmar. Even Snoopy got dumped at the altar. Happiness may be a warm puppy, but as Schulz once said, "Happiness is not very funny." Schulz infused the strips with his lifelong feelings of depression and insecurity—he had his heart broken by a real-life red-haired girl—and they showed, Camus-like, how one could feel lonely even in a crowd. Many of his panels have two characters outside, at night, staring at a field of stars. "Let's go inside and watch television," Charlie Brown says in one. "I'm beginning to feel insignificant."

Big sentiments from a kid with 6-in. legs. But Schulz did not draw little adults; he drew out with subtle humor the anxieties children and adults shared in his era. Though *Peanuts* was hardly political, the atomic peril, for instance, crept in. "On Tuesdays I worry about personality problems," said Charlie Brown in 1960. "Thursday is my day for worrying about the world getting blown up." Schulz didn't cram those thoughts into his kids' basketball-size heads. Oppenheimer and Khrushchev beat him to it.

Most of us will lose more often than we win. That's the joke of *Peanuts*. Schulz made it funny with characters who faced a Tiespian suburban world of kite-eating trees and yanked-away footballs with resilience and curiosity. Sincere as a pumpkin patch, his lifework is a reminder that self-awareness and a refined sense of irony do not mean affectlessness, that being a loser does not mean being defeated.



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What is VIOXX?

VIOXX is a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) that is used to reduce pain and inflammation (swelling and soreness). VIOXX is available as a tablet or a liquid that you take by mouth.

VIOXX is a medicine for:

- relief of osteoarthritis (the arthritis caused by age-related "wear and tear" on bones and joints)
- management of acute pain in adults (like the short-term pain you can get after a dental or surgical operation)
- treatment of menstrual pain (pain during women's monthly periods).

Who should not take VIOXX?

Do not take VIOXX if you:

- have had an allergic reaction such as asthma attacks, hives, or swelling of the throat and face to aspirin or other NSAIDs (for example, ibuprofen and naproxen).
- have had an allergic reaction to rofecoxib, which is the active ingredient of VIOXX, or to any of its inactive ingredients. (See inactive ingredients at the end of this leaflet.)

What should I tell my doctor before and during treatment with VIOXX?

Tell your doctor if you are:

- pregnant or plan to become pregnant. VIOXX should not be used in late pregnancy because it may harm the fetus.
- breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed. It is not known whether VIOXX is passed through to human breast milk and what its effects could be on a nursing child.

Tell your doctor if you have:

- kidney disease
- liver disease
- heart failure
- high blood pressure
- had an allergic reaction to aspirin or other NSAIDs
- had a serious stomach problem in the past.

Tell your doctor about:

- any other medical problems or allergies you have now or have had.
- all medicines that you are taking or plan to take, even those you can get without a prescription.

Tell your doctor if you develop:

- ulcer or bleeding symptoms (for instance, stomach burning or black stools, which are signs of possible stomach bleeding).
- unexplained weight gain or swelling of the feet and/or legs.
- skin rash or allergic reactions. If you have a severe allergic reaction, get medical help right away.

How should I take VIOXX?

VIOXX should be taken once a day. Your doctor will decide what dose of VIOXX you should take and how long you should take it. You may take VIOXX with or without food.

Can I take VIOXX with other medicines?

Tell your doctor about all of the other medicines you are taking or plan to take while you are on VIOXX, even other medicines that you can get

without a prescription. Your doctor may want to check that your medicines are working properly together if you are taking other medicines such as:

- methotrexate (a medicine used to suppress the immune system)
- warfarin (a blood thinner)
- rifampin (an antibiotic)
- ACE inhibitors (medicines used for high blood pressure and heart failure).

What are the possible side effects of VIOXX?

Serious but rare side effects that have been reported in patients taking VIOXX and/or related medicines have included:

- Serious stomach problems, such as stomach and intestinal bleeding, can occur with or without warning symptoms. These problems, if severe, could lead to hospitalization or death. Although this happens rarely, you should watch for signs that you may have this serious side effect and tell your doctor right away.
- Serious kidney problems occur rarely in patients taking NSAIDs.
- Severe liver problems occur rarely in patients taking NSAIDs. Tell your doctor if you develop symptoms of liver problems. These include nausea, tiredness, itching, tenderness in the right upper abdomen, and flu-like symptoms.

More common, but less serious side effects reported with VIOXX have included the following:

Upper and/or lower respiratory infection and/or inflammation
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Dizziness
Diarrhea
Nausea and/or vomiting
Heartburn, stomach pain and upset
Swelling of the legs and/or feet
High blood pressure
Back pain
Tiredness
Urinary tract infection.

These side effects were reported in at least 2% of osteoarthritis patients receiving daily doses of VIOXX 12.5 mg to 25 mg in clinical studies.

The side effects described above do not include all of the side effects reported with VIOXX. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about side effects. Your doctor or pharmacist can discuss with you a more complete list of side effects. Any time you have a medical problem you think may be related to VIOXX, talk to your doctor.

What else can I do to help manage my osteoarthritis pain?

Talk to your doctor about:

- Exercise
- Controlling your weight
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- Using support devices.

What else should I know about VIOXX?

This leaflet provides a summary of certain information about VIOXX. If you have any questions or concerns about VIOXX, osteoarthritis or pain, talk to your health professional. Your pharmacist can give you an additional leaflet that is written for health professionals.

Do not share VIOXX with anyone else; it was prescribed only for you. It should be taken only for the condition for which it was prescribed.

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Issued October 1999

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Spain's Conquistador

Velázquez's paintings raised Iberian art to the level of 17th century Europe's greatest masters

By ROBERT HUGHES

THE THEOLOGY OF PAINTING" IS how one of Diego de Velázquez's 17th century admirers described his work. What did he mean? That the work was true; that it represented a truth about nature, as theology did about God; that this truth was conclusive, beyond further argument. In a culture ruled by King and church, where the arts were easily accused of frivolity and sensuality, this was a colossal claim. Very rarely, an artist gets to transform the conditions of his culture—not just add to them or jog their evolution, but alter them decisively. This is what Picasso did for America and Europe in the 20th century. Perhaps less obviously, Velázquez did the same for Spain in the 17th century. He showed that the nation's painting need not be provincial, that it could be open to Europe and, especially, to such Venetian masters as Titian. Titian had made masterpieces for Philip II of Spain; now Velázquez would work on the same scale for Philip IV, grandson of Titian's patron. With Velázquez at the court, Spain no longer needed to import its talent from abroad.

Through Jan. 16, the Frick Collection in New York City is marking the 400th anniversary of Velázquez's birth with a small but choice loan show—six paintings from New York museums. Some are well known, like the portrait of Juan de Pareja, Velázquez's Moorish slave and studio assistant. Others are less so, such as the fierce authoritarian portrait of Olivares, Philip IV's chief minister for finance and war. The show is an anti-blockbuster and not to be missed by anyone who cares about painting.

Velázquez couldn't have cared less about leaving a record of his own personality in his work. Confession (except to a priest) wasn't part of his culture. His objectivity formed itself around an almost

punitively observed decorum. He must have felt he was a great painter, but his life's struggle was to establish himself as a great gentleman. No court was more hedged with exact signs and symbols of degree than that of the Spanish monarchy. Velázquez spent much of his adult life lobbying, campaigning, espaliering the family tree and sucking up to the noblesse in order to be granted the red cross of a Knight of Santiago; it meant more to



REALISM AND PANACHE: Velázquez's sublime *Maria Teresa, Infanta of Spain*

him than any picture—whereas to us it means nothing, except as evidence of a great artist's hunger for social distinction. Yes, we would like to know more about Velázquez, but in front of the paintings it doesn't seem so bad that we don't.

Velázquez's achievement was unique in the Spain of his day. He soon grew out of painting religious pictures. Instead he created a secular and courtly art—mainly portraits—in which a meticulous realism was conjoined with an extraordinary sense of the mechanics of painting. Velázquez gives you the physical marks of the brush, declares in advance that they are special effects, and yet defies you to shake free from their illusion.

A marvelous example of this process

at work is the so-called Fraga portrait of Philip IV, named for the town where it was painted, in a temporary studio, when the King was leading his armies against the rebellious Catalans in 1640. Velázquez finished it on the march, as it were; though known at court as a *pin-tor flemático*, a phlegmatic painter, he whipped it off in a few days. The head of the King, with its long and beautifully blended brushstrokes, looks very considered; less so his magnificent red outfit, which is pure Impressionism 200 years early—the broken touches of the silver brocade and their black shadings mix on the eye, producing a delectable liveliness, a scribbled spontaneity that no other 17th century artist could rival.

The exquisite little head of Philip IV's daughter, the Infanta Maria Teresa, is even more summary. Velázquez paints shapes that look so obsolete that they're almost abstract—the massive crowning of the brown wig, for instance, and the mysterious, icily translucent lace butterflies that adorn it. He paints paint, or, more exactly, cosmetics: that pale mask flushed with matte pink, a plain little girl—she was a teenager then—propelled onto the international market by Papa's political schemes. Such portraits were made to be sent abroad to the relevant ambassadors, in the hope of arranging a suitable marriage. In due course, in the year that Velázquez died, 1660, the infanta was betrothed to Louis XIV of France, and

thus embarked on more than two decades of wretchedness with her faithless Sun King; perhaps this small, pictorially sublime icon helped seal her fate.

The odd thing is the long delay in Velázquez's influence. He hardly touched the next generation of Iberian artists, and the first unquestionably great Spanish painter to fall under his spell was Goya, more than 100 years after Velázquez's death. The reason was social. Most of his work was done for the King and the court, and was thus invisible to young artists. And practically none of it went abroad. Not until the museum age, when what had been private became public, did Velázquez become the intellectual property of mediocrity and genius alike. Numerically, this is a little show. But with Velázquez, a little goes a long way. ■

C I N E M A

MATT DAMON ACTS OUT

He's popular, hardworking and sincere. So it might surprise you how much he has in common with the lonely misfit he plays in *The Talented Mr. Ripley*

By BELINDA LUSCOMBE

HE'S NOT SHORT. FOR SOME REASON THIS is the first thing people want to know when they hear you have met Matt Damon. "He's short, right?" the inquiries come. "How tall is he?" "Is he a Pygmy or what?" He's actually 5 ft. 11 in., but still, the fact that the rest of us are not Matt Damon—have no Oscar, have never kissed Winona Ryder and are not making \$7 million a movie—would be no more palatable even if we could put him in the "good-looking but short" box with, say, Tom Cruise and Mel Gibson.

It's just our puny way of kicking out at an industry that manufactures a product so completely irresistible to so many of us: the celebrity. And in the 29-year-old Damon, the star factory has found a mother lode of raw material: charm, good looks, an even temperament, smarts, a relish for hard work, devotion to his morn. But if it makes you feel any better, Matt Damon feels your pain. He didn't used to be him either.

"There are times I've been rejected that would spin your head around," says Damon. "You wouldn't believe I sat there and let people say stuff like that to me." Before *The Rainmaker* and *Good Will Hunting*—the one-two punch that threw him into the spotlight and led to six more back-to-back roles, including his latest, in *The Talented Mr. Ripley*—Damon struggled for seven years to get enough work to feed himself. But tough as those years were, they are eclipsed in his memory by an experience he had when he was nine or 10. "I moved to a neighboring city, and I really wanted to go back to my old school and see my friends," says Damon. "And my mother came up with this idea: 'Well, why don't you go back and spend a day there?'" But when she called and asked

Photographs for TIME by Kwaku Alston





whether her son could return to say good-bye and achieve some closure, the principal said no. "I couldn't understand it," says Damon, his indignation still palpable. "The feeling of rejection was so deep." His mother, a professor of early-childhood education, wrote a stinging letter to the principal, which the young Damon carried around for weeks. "I remember thinking, 'Someday this person will be in a position of needing something from me,'" he says.

So although it might seem that if one were making a movie about a charismatic, handsome, wealthy young man and the lonely misfit who desperately wants to be him, one would cast Damon in the glamour boy's role, he says he identifies with the dork. "I really relate to Ripley," says Damon. "I always did. I think most people will." And while there are differences—Damon says he played Ripley as a virgin, which, given his dating history (Claire Danes and Minnie Driver are two of the famous ones), must have been a stretch—there are also similarities. Damon and Ripley are both from the Boston area. Both are eager to please, polite and attentive to whomever they're with. Both work incredibly hard on the project at hand. For Ripley, Damon spent a month learning to play the piano and perfected *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* on the harmonium for a scene he knew would be cut from the movie. "I'm a writer. I knew what would be the first to go," says Damon, who won his Oscar for co-writing *Good Will Hunting* with Ben Affleck. "But it wasn't a waste of time, because playing the piano informed the way Ripley walked and the way he sat." Besides, he says, flashing his extra-wide grin, "now I can play Bach and *Chopsticks* and nothing in between."

After Ripley, for which he lost 25 lbs. in order to appear pale and skinny, Damon spent a month learning to ride and bulking up for his portrayal of an 18-year-old cowboy in *All the Pretty Horses*, which will be released in late 2000. When Ripley director Anthony Minghella visited Damon on that set, he barely recognized him. "He was like the more successful, more centered, more handsome, just generally more masculine and surefooted cousin of Ripley," he says. And as Damon conducted a barrage of press interviews for Ripley, he was squirming under a brace because he had separated a rib while swinging a golf club for yet another role, as a World War I veteran who finds enlightenment through his caddy in *The Legend of Bagger Vance*, which is being directed by Robert Redford. "Matt seems to work on a process of 'If it doesn't hurt,

it can't be right," says Minghella. Damon shrugs off the compliment. "I just don't think there's an excuse for not working as hard as you can," he says.

Ironically, the star and the guilt-ridden murderer have something else in common. Both Ripley and Damon work their way through conversations like poachers in Yellowstone. They sense they're being watched, so they constantly observe themselves. Halfway through talking about the responsibilities of fame and how it should be used for good, Damon breaks off. "Oh God," he says. "I sound like Miss America." He seems to have an acute sense of what others, particularly reporters, want to hear. He talks sports with the guys. He does classic

movie routines with the show-biz old-timers. To a thirty-something female, he talks mostly about his mother.

The glaring difference between Ripley and Damon is that Damon has managed to pull off what Ripley doesn't: he has achieved the trappings of privilege and success, but not, it seems, at the expense of his soul. Partly this is thanks to the support of his friends, most famously his childhood buddy Affleck, with whom he has

FAMILY GUY: He took his mom to the 1998 Oscars

been so closely entwined in the public eye that they now try to avoid speaking about each other to the press. ("It's not like we're bitching ex-husbands, or anything," Damon says.) More important, it's thanks to his family. They're quite a clan: liberal, intellectual, active in social causes, politically sophisticated. "They're the most fun, most interesting people," says Skylar Ulrich, the former girlfriend who was the model for the role Minnie Driver played in *Good Will Hunting*, and who's now a doctor, married to Metallica drummer Lars Ulrich. "They're really tight knit, and yet they're very individual."

Damon is close to both his father Kent Damon, a retired stockbroker whose marriage to Matt's mother ended when Matt was two, and his older brother Kyle, 32, a sculptor. But it's his mother, Nancy Carlsson-Paige, who seems to have had the most influence: When colleagues at Lesley College in Cambridge, Mass., asked Carlsson-Paige for her son's autograph for their

MATT'S MULTIPLE MOVIE IDENTITIES

NEAL PERLIN COLLECTION



SCHOOL TIES Damon played against type as an anti-Semitic bully who targets the new kid in school, Brendan Fraser



COURAGE UNDER FIRE The small role of a guilt-stricken junkie soldier investigated by Denzel Washington was his breakthrough



THE RAINMAKER His first starring role, as a greenhorn lawyer mentored by Danny DeVito, traded on his natural aura of integrity



GOOD WILL HUNTING In the film that changed it all, Damon played a genius with a troubled soul, and Robin Williams was his therapist



SAVING PRIVATE RYAN He was appealingly forthright as the title character and held his own alongside Tom Hanks, left, and Ed Burns



ROUNDERS As a reformed gambler drawn back into the world of high-stakes poker, he displayed the anguish of a good guy with a bad habit



DOGMA Reteaming with buddy Ben Affleck, he explored his comic side, as an angel trying to get back to heaven via New Jersey

daughters, she instead invited the daughters to a discussion group. She showed them pictures of Matt at their age and explained that he was just a regular person, like them. She acknowledges, however, that in one way her son is different. "It's unusual for children to become interested in something really young and then stay with it their whole lives," says Carlsson-Paige, who encouraged her son as she watched him use her hats, tablecloths, necklaces and gloves to make himself into characters from the time he was two. "But that's Matthew. He came to me when he was eight and said, 'I know what I want to be when I grow up.' And I said, 'What's that, honey?,' knowing exactly what he would say. And when he said, 'An actor,' I said, 'That's nice. Now go out and play.'"TM And in some ways, that's exactly what he still does.

The things that make the real-life Damon a star—his agreeable features, easy smile and whelpish energy—keep the audience glued to his side in *The Talented Mr. Ripley* despite the repulsive acts his character commits. His apple-pie qualities are essential to the moral disquiet Minghella strives to create in the audience. But they don't necessarily make Damon a good actor. If Damon has a demon, it is that he thinks the jury is still out on whether he can act. "Gwyneth [Paltrow] can walk into a scene and be talking about something else, and they say 'Action!' and she turns into the person she's playing," says Damon of his *Ripley* co-star. "My life would be a lot easier if I could do that." But those who have directed him demur. "He's way stronger than he thinks he is," says Billy Bob Thornton, who worked with him on *All the Pretty Horses*. Notes Minghella of Damon's work in *Ripley*: "It's not a display performance. But the journey that he makes in the film is extraordinary. It's so carefully drawn." And both of them use the exact same phrase: "He just gets it."

He seems to get the fame thing too. When the school that rejected Damon 20 years ago wrote recently asking for a photograph for its 75th-anniversary wall display, Damon and his mother talked it over for a while. What he had predicted had come to pass. "Karmically, it was big," says Damon. A pause. "Of course I'll send them something." Of course. —With reporting by Georgia Harbison



CAN MATT PLAY RIPLEY'S GAME?

He brings feeling to an unfeeling murderer

By RICHARD CORLISS

FIRST QUESTION: WHO IS TOM RIPLEY? He is the lead character in five novels by Patricia Highsmith and now, as incarnated by Matt Damon, a beguiling movie icon in the making.

Second question: Who cares? For a start, an international coterie of readers spread across four decades. To that devoted coterie, add Anthony Minghella. "Ripley is one of the most interesting characters in postwar fiction," Minghella says, and he

THE BEAUTIFUL AND DAMNED: Paltrow and Law with Damon the interloper

ought to know. The writer-director has spent three years, ever since he finished his Oscar-winning epic *The English Patient*, puzzling out the emotional vectors of crime fiction's most seductive sociopath.

Set mostly in southern Italy, Minghella's tantalizing movie captures the pulse, temperature and texture of the idle rich at play and the yearning of Ripley, who wants that good life so much he'd kill for it. Inhabiting this very *dolce vita* is a quintet of smart-looking young performers—Jude Law, Gwyneth Paltrow, Cate Blanchett, Philip Seymour Hoffman and Jack Davenport—giving vigorous life and fine shading to roles of wealth or breeding. They parade their star quality (or supporting-actor quality) not by screaming and cussing Method style but by radiating an unforced glamour that recalls Hollywood in its Golden Age.

Observing these blessed creatures, coveting their unearned good fortune, is Damon's Ripley, more muted and awkward than they but a fast study. Ripley's outsider status is what especially appealed to Minghella, 45, a playwright and former professor whose Italian immigrant parents still make and sell ice cream on the Isle of Wight. "This sense of a man with his nose pressed up against the window, the sense that there's a better life being led by other people—to me, these feelings are familiar and pungent."

To discuss Minghella's adaptation of the *Ripley* book—how he has deepened it, enriched it, possibly distorted it—we'll be spilling a bean or two about the plot,

THE CAST



JUDE LAW

■ **Dickie Greenleaf**
 ■ **IN THE BOOK**
 Rich man's son who has everything Tom wants. Tom plots his death and takes his identity

■ **IN THE MOVIE**
 Sexy, malevolent; has shameful secrets; dies in a crime of passion



GWYNETH PALTROW

■ **Marge Sherwood**
 ■ **IN THE BOOK**
 No beauty queen, she carries a torch that Dickie never lights. Suspicious of Tom's friendship with Dickie

■ **IN THE MOVIE**
 Dickie's glam fiancée; still wary of Ripley



KATE BLANCHETT

■ **Meredith Logue**
 ■ **IN THE BOOK**
 She's not

■ **IN THE MOVIE**
 The one nice American plutocrat—sweet, funny and awkward. After the final fadeout, she could become Mrs. Dickie Greenleaf—or Mrs. Tom Ripley



PHILIP SEYMOUR HOFFMAN

■ **Freddie Miles**
 ■ **IN THE BOOK**
 Gross, well-bred pal of Dickie's who sees through Ripley's game and pays for it with a splitting headache

■ **IN THE MOVIE**
 Exactly the same



JACK DAVENPORT

■ **Peter Smith-Kingsley**
 ■ **IN THE BOOK**
 Mentioned in passing as a friend of Dickie's

■ **IN THE MOVIE**
 Elegant, caring homosexual; squires Marge in her search for Dickie. Loves Tom just as he is



Two who are similar but not the same



Seduced by the glamour of the rich

which is, anyway, well known from the novel (published in 1955 and still in print) and a 1960 French film version, René Clément's *Purple Noon* (which is on video and was rereleased in U.S. theaters in 1996). You're welcome to see the new movie first—it should be on every naughty child's Christmas wish list. Then come back and we'll talk.

Back so soon? Good. Let's go.

Highsmith described *The Talented Mr. Ripley* as being about "two young men with a certain resemblance—not much—one of whom kills the other and assumes his identity." In the novel, Tom Ripley, an orphan in his mid-20s with a gift for larceny and mimicry, is hired by a rich ship-builder to go to Mongibello, an Italian resort village where the man's son Dick-

ie Greenleaf (played by Law in the new film) has been idling, to try persuading the lad to return home to the family business. Tom agrees, sails to Europe and, on seeing Dickie, is dazzled by his luscious indolence. Dickie paints, indifferently; he tans, splendidly; and he flirts with Marge (Paltrow), a young American who has a crush on him. Dickie is an effortless charmer who enjoys watching people try to charm him, and Tom is up to the challenge. "Dickie inherited wealth, looks and privilege," says Minghella. "Ripley inherited nothing and has nothing. He so much wants the life that Dickie has that he'll do anything to get that life."

For a time, the heir is amused by Tom's charm and novelty. But Dickie is easily bored, and he grows tired of Tom.

Seeing the chance both to rid himself of a critical friend and to replace him, Tom kills Dickie in the sea off San Remo, buries the body and goes to Rome, setting himself up as Dickie. The ruse lasts until Freddie Miles (Hoffman), an obnoxious but observant pal of Dickie's, comes to visit. Panicked by discovery, Tom bashes Freddie's head and deposits the corpse in a cemetery. Now Ripley's game begins with the police and Dickie's family. Tom will lie, forge letters and documents, anything to keep being Dickie—a role he feels he was born to play.

In writing *Ripley*, Highsmith had two bolts of brilliance. The first was to let the bad guy get away with his crimes. All mystery writers are murderers; they get

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Human Data: In a study of 100 pregnant women, the mean plasma concentration of ATRA was 0.05 to 0.1 mg/kg/day, approximately 1% of the 100 mg/kg/day dose. In a study of 100 pregnant women, the mean plasma concentration of ATRA was 0.05 to 0.1 mg/kg/day, approximately 1% of the 100 mg/kg/day dose. In a study of 100 pregnant women, the mean plasma concentration of ATRA was 0.05 to 0.1 mg/kg/day, approximately 1% of the 100 mg/kg/day dose.

and because of the potential for tumorigenicity shown for omeprazole in rat carcinogenicity studies, a decision should be made whether to discontinue nursing or discontinue the drug, taking into account the importance of the drug to the mother. **Pediatric Use:** Safety and effectiveness in pediatric patients have not been established.

ADVERSE REACTIONS: In the U.S. clinical trial population of 485 patients (including duodenal ulcer, Zollinger-Ellison syndrome and resistant ulcer patients) the following adverse experiences were reported to occur in 1% or more of patients on therapy with PRILLOSEC® (omeprazole). Numbers in parentheses indicate percentages of adverse experiences considered by investigators as possibly, probably, or definitely related to the drug.

	Omega-3 (n=463)	Placebo (n=46)	Paradox (n=195)
Headache	8.9 (2.4)	8.3	7.1 (5.0)
Dizziness	3.0 (1.9)	3.1 (1.6)	2.1 (1.0)
Abdominal Pain	2.4 (1.0)	3.1	2.1
Nausea	2.2 (0.9)	3.1	4.1 (0.5)
URI	1.8	1.8	
Drowsiness	1.5 (0.4)	1.8	2.6 (1.0)
Swelling	1.5 (0.4)	4.7	1.5 (0.5)
Rash	1.5 (1.1)	0.0	0.0
Constipation	1.1 (0.9)	0.0	0.0
Cough	1.1	0.0	1.5
Asthma	1.1 (0.2)	1.8 (1.0)	1.5 (1.0)
Back Pain	1.1	8.0	0.5

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Body as a Whole, site unspecified	5.3	3.2
Arthralgia	1.3	0.8
Constipation	1.5	0.8
Digestive System	3.7	2.5
Flatulence	2.7	5.8
Nausea	4.0	6.7
Vomiting	3.2	10.0
Acid regurgitation	1.9	3.3
Musculoskeletal/Neurological	2.9	2.5

Address correspondence to: Dr. J. A. J. van't Hof, Department of Infectious Diseases, University Hospital Groningen, P.O. Box 30.001, 3000 RB Groningen, The Netherlands. E-mail: j.a.j.van't.hof@azg.umcg.nl

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RIPLEY'S CEREAL

The Talented Ms. Highsmith

into the mind, under the skin, of a killer, if only to determine how the foul deed can be accomplished. Then, typically, they bring in a detective to unravel the plot and cuff the culprit. Highsmith simply ditched the civilized pretense of justice avenged. She tore the final, comeuppance chapter out of Ripley's story, left him giddy with triumph—and let him flourish in four more books. The snake, having shed its old skin, slithers away; the reader is both shocked and pleased. Crime pays.

Minghella does not let Ripley off that easily. He devises two characters who fall for the killer and get in his way: a sweet, rich buttinsky (Blanchett) and a gentle homosexual (Davenport). Can he kiss them, or kiss them off, without bumping them off? We won't tell, but we will say that Tom has second thoughts about his addiction to killing the things he loves. The film lets Tom off the hook for the murders of Dickie and Freddie. Then it creates a new hook and leaves you wondering if Ripley will hang from it.

"I was trying to honor the book, which is about a man who commits murder and isn't caught," Minghella says. "But I also wanted to investigate what that actually means. At the end of the film, Ripley is imprisoned by the consequences of his own action.

There's a difference between public accountability and private justice. He appears to have gotten away; he seems to get away with everything. In a way he's sentenced to freedom. It's painful to have this talent for escape, for being able to improvise one's way out of any situation. To Ripley, it's a curse."

Highsmith's second coup was Ripley himself—a fastidious fellow of refined if acquired tastes who is utterly unimpeded by conscience. Tom is a sportsman. "Risks were what made the whole thing fun," he muses. His lack of guilt or shame makes Tom a blithe, resourceful fellow, totally at ease with the man he's become.

Minghella's Ripley is different, less sure of himself, more human, and thus reduced in stature. He lies to Dickie's father when he says he went to Princeton with the boy. He believes not in inspired improvisation, as the book's Ripley does, but in studying hard. In the movie, Tom's plotting has the calculation of a Bach fugue; Dickie's avocation is playing

IF YOUR FATHER WALKED OUT BEFORE YOU WERE BORN AND YOUR MOTHER says she tried to abort you by guzzling turpentine, you may grow up with a sour view of humanity. Mary Patricia Plangman Highsmith—born in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1921—had murder on her mind from the first of her 23 novels, the 1950 *Strangers on a Train*. Alfred Hitchcock made a film of it a year later, though he dared include only one of the book's two murders. Soon after, the woman whom screenwriter Michael Tolkin (*The Player*) calls "our

best expatriate since Henry James" left for Europe, where she was welcomed as an important novelist, not just a thriller writer. From this pleasant remove, she wrote of another ruthlessly imaginative expat, Tom Ripley.

The five novels—*The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1955), *Ripley Under Ground* (1970), *Ripley's Game* (1974), *The Boy Who Followed Ripley* (1980) and *Ripley Under Water* (1991)—trace a rake's progress from callow kid to elegant arriviste. "Wonderful to sit in a famous café," he thinks after his first murder, "and to think of tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow being Dickie Greenleaf!" For all his tomorrows, Tom gets to steep himself in *la Dickie vita*. He lives in a fine house near Paris with a handsome blond wife who is blessedly indifferent to his shadier activities. From Dickie's estate and from the profits of an art-forgery racket, Tom has an income that gives him the leisure to paint, garden and commit the odd homicide. His whole life is a consummate forgery. He's become a counterfeit Dickie, better than the original.

A prolific recluse, the author found her most devoted audience abroad



A prolific recluse, the author found her most devoted audience abroad

The last two Ripley novels are slack, ungainly; Ripley is more prey than predator. But the first three (recently issued in a hardcover omnibus by Knopf/Everyman's Library) have the tone of high, dark comedy. Tom kills—Dickie, Dickie's pal Freddie Miles, an American art lover, a bunch of mafiosi—as much for the game of eluding capture as for motives of profit or survival. In *Ripley's Game* he gets an ailing man involved in a murder plot only because the man once spoke abruptly to Tom. Then, when the man desperately tries to kill a Mafia goon, who shows up to help but Ripley? Good deeds or bad, they're just caprices for a gentleman rogue.

"I find the public passion for justice quite boring and artificial," Highsmith wrote, "for neither life nor nature cares if justice is ever done or not." But she cared for Ripley, her alter ego or attractive opposite. She attributed the first book's popularity to "the insolence and audacity of Ripley himself... I often had the feeling Ripley was writing it and I was merely typing." In gratitude, she kept him forever young. The novels span 36 years, and each is set in the present; yet Tom ages only about a decade. He is the Dorian Gray of crime.

His creator's life was less charmed. A recluse with a prison matron's visage, she had several lovers, of both sexes, but was alone at the end with her cats and pet snails. Did this adopted doyenne of Europe resent being neglected back home? At her death, in 1995, she had no U.S. publisher for her last work. And though nearly a score of films were made from her novels and short stories, most of them were European. *The Talented Mr. Ripley* is the first Hollywood-studio production of a Highsmith novel since *Strangers on a Train*. —R.C.



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jazz saxophone instead of painting, and he loves the dangerous freedom of Chet Baker and Charlie Parker. As played by Law, Dickie oozes a reckless sensuality, turning the beam on and off at will, indulging Marge's love while he stealthily impregnates an Italian woman. In a movie that ups the sexual octane of the book, Tom's interest in Dickie is explicitly homoerotic, the yearning poignant and desperate. The killing in the boat is less murder than the fatal flailing of a rejected suitor. Tom is crushed by Dickie's dismissal, so he crushes Dickie.

"In the book," says Minghella, "there is something so psychopathic about Ripley, and it works wonderfully as a literary experience. I wanted to talk about what was common to us, not what was distancing. To do that I had to take away the sense of premeditation and show the trouble you can get into by this accumulation of small lies and small wants."

As all crime writers are killers, all actors are liars—Ripleys for their art and glory. Highsmith's Tom thinks of himself in moments of stress as a consummate actor thrilled by the conviction of his deceit. "If you wanted to be cheerful, or melancholic, or wistful, or thoughtful, or courteous," he observes, "you simply had to act those things with every gesture." What is acting if not the forgery of someone else's personality in order to possess and consume it?

We look at Alain Delon (the delicate stud of *Purple Noon*) or Dennis Hopper (who gave Ripley a cowboy swagger in the 1977 *The American Friend*, Wim Wenders' adaptation of Ripley's *Game*) and see an actor sharpening his tools: the attentiveness, the useful smile, the waiting for a cue to make his move. Ripley watches Dickie, and an actor prepares. We watch the actor playing Ripley and learn the secrets of his duplicitous craft. It's as if a famous seducer had made a how-to video.

Damon, who like Blanchett and Paltrow was cast in the film before achieving Oscar-night eminence, knows how to emit charm—of the aw-shucks variety in *The Rainmaker* or streetwise in *Good Will Hunting*. Here, though, he is a plodder. Pasty white among the bronze gods of Mongibello, striding stiffly, with nerdy glasses adorning his pinched face, Damon could more easily be mistaken for the creepy losers Hoffman usually



plays (in *Boogie Nights* or *Happiness*) than for a patrician hunk like Dickie. The deglamorizing of Ripley pays off beautifully in his final meeting with Freddie, who sees through Tom's sham, quickly spotting the poseur's lapses of taste and


LIGHTS! CAMERA! ANGST! To Minghella, Ripley's talent for escaping is a curse

showing a delicious upper-class contempt for a real nobody trying to be a fake somebody.

This Ripley is an expression of our anxieties, our fear of being rejected or found out for the frauds that, deep down, we may suspect we are. Ultimately he is a figure out of Poe or Dostoyevsky, tormented by disgust at the creature he's become. What he is not is Highsmith's Ripley, a suave villain who loves his work, whom we may not admire but have to envy. Could not Damon have invested a little charisma in the role? One thinks longingly of Leonardo DiCaprio, who was once mentioned for the part. His soft features would have rhymed nicely with Law's; his boyishness could have tempted us into loving Tom instead of only pitying him.

You may ask again, Who cares if the movie is unlike the book? It has to succeed as its own experience. But the alterations here—in a film so sumptuous and intelligent one wants to embrace it—diminish the richness of a chillingly complex character. The film is some stranger pretending to be Tom Ripley. And like Ripley, it had to kill the thing it would become.

—Reported by
Georgia Harrison/New York



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Let your healthcare professional know about any other prescription or over-the-counter medications you are taking. ZYBAN is not recommended for women who are pregnant or breast-feeding.

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Information for the Patient
ZYBAN® (bupropion hydrochloride) Sustained-Release Tablets

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IMPORTANT WARNING:

There is a chance that approximately 1 out of every 1000 people taking bupropion hydrochloride, the active ingredient in ZYBAN, will have a seizure. The chance of this happening increases if you:

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1. What is ZYBAN?

ZYBAN is a prescription medicine to help people quit smoking. Studies have shown that more than one third of people quit smoking for at least 1 month while taking ZYBAN and participating in a patient support program. For many patients, ZYBAN reduces withdrawal symptoms and the urge to smoke. ZYBAN should be used with a patient support program. It is important to participate in the behavioral program, counseling, or other support program your health care professional recommends.

2. Who should not take ZYBAN?

You should not take ZYBAN if you:

- have a seizure disorder (for example, epilepsy);
- are already taking WELLBUTRIN, WELLBUTRIN SR, or any other medicines that contain bupropion hydrochloride;
- have or have had an eating disorder (for example, bulimia or anorexia nervosa);
- are currently taking or have recently taken a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI);
- are allergic to bupropion.

3. Are there special concerns for women?

ZYBAN is not recommended for women who are pregnant or breast-feeding. Women should notify their doctor if they become pregnant or intend to become pregnant while taking ZYBAN.

4. How should I take ZYBAN?

- You should take ZYBAN as directed by your doctor. The usual recommended dosing is to take one 150-mg tablet in the morning for the first 3 days. On the fourth day, begin taking one 150-mg tablet in the morning and one 150-mg tablet in the early evening. Doses should be taken at least 8 hours apart.
- **Never take an "extra" dose of ZYBAN.** If you forget to take a dose, do not take an extra tablet to "catch up" for the dose you forgot. Wait and take your next tablet at the regular time. Do not take more tablets than your doctor prescribed. This is important so you do not increase your chance of having a seizure.
- It is important to swallow ZYBAN Tablets whole. Do not chew, divide, or crush tablets.

5. How long should I take ZYBAN?

Most people should take ZYBAN for at least 7 to 12 weeks. Some people may need to take ZYBAN for a longer period of time to assist in their smoking cessation efforts. Follow your doctor's instructions.

6. When should I stop smoking?

It takes about 1 week for ZYBAN to reach the right levels in your body to be effective. So, to maximize your chance of quitting, you should not stop smoking until you have been taking ZYBAN for 1 week.

You should set a date to stop smoking during the second week you're taking ZYBAN® (bupropion hydrochloride) Sustained-Release Tablets.

7. Can I smoke while taking ZYBAN?

It is not physically dangerous to smoke and use ZYBAN at the same time. However, continuing to smoke after the date you set to stop smoking will seriously reduce your chance of breaking your smoking habit.

8. Can ZYBAN be used at the same time as nicotine patches?

Yes, ZYBAN and nicotine patches can be used at the same time but should only be used together under the supervision of your doctor. Using ZYBAN and nicotine patches together may raise your blood pressure. Your doctor will probably want to check your blood pressure regularly to make sure that it stays within acceptable levels.

DO NOT SMOKE AT ANY TIME if you are using a nicotine patch or any other nicotine product along with ZYBAN. It is possible to get too much nicotine and have serious side effects.

9. What are possible side effects of ZYBAN?

Like all medicines, ZYBAN may cause side effects.

- The most common side effects include dry mouth and difficulty sleeping. These side effects are generally mild and often disappear after a few weeks. If you have difficulty sleeping, avoid taking your medicine too close to bedtime.
- The most common side effects that caused people to stop taking ZYBAN during clinical studies were shakiness and skin rash.
- Stop taking ZYBAN and contact your doctor or health care professional if you have signs of an allergic reaction such as a rash, hives, or difficulty in breathing. Discuss any other troublesome side effects with your doctor.
- Use caution before driving a car or operating complex, hazardous machinery until you know if ZYBAN affects your ability to perform these tasks.

10. Can I drink alcohol while I am taking ZYBAN?

It is best to not drink alcohol at all or to drink very little while taking ZYBAN. If you drink a lot of alcohol and suddenly stop, you may increase your chance of having a seizure. Therefore, it is important to discuss your use of alcohol with your doctor before you begin taking ZYBAN.

11. Will ZYBAN affect other medicines I am taking?

ZYBAN may affect other medicines you're taking. It is important not to take medicines that may increase the chance for you to have a seizure. Therefore, you should make sure that your doctor knows about all medicines—prescription or over-the-counter—you are taking or plan to take.

12. Do ZYBAN Tablets have a characteristic odor?

ZYBAN Tablets may have a characteristic odor. If present, this odor is normal.

13. How should I store ZYBAN?

- Store ZYBAN at room temperature, out of direct sunlight.
- Keep ZYBAN in a tightly closed container.
- Keep ZYBAN out of the reach of children.

This summary provides important information about ZYBAN. This summary cannot replace the more detailed information that you need from your doctor. If you have any questions or concerns about either ZYBAN or smoking cessation, talk to your doctor or other health care professional.

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Greenville, NC 27834
for Glaxo Wellcome Inc.
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

U.S. Patent Nos. 5,358,970; 5,427,798; 5,731,000; 5,763,493

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September 1999

RL-754

Printed in USA.

BUP579FO

October 1999



CHARISMA: Robards and Cruise stand out in a strong ensemble cast

C I N E M A

BAH, HUMBUG

Very few sugarplums are dancing through this year's holiday movies. Still, there are a few satisfying treats

By RICHARD CORLISS and RICHARD SCHICKEL

THERE'S A SIMPLE EXPLANATION FOR THE TRADITIONALLY HIGH suicide rate at holiday time: Christmas movies. Just when we need a little, seasonal perk-up—some of the cheerful idiocy that Hollywood is happy to market 11 months a year—the studios send us films about depression, corruption and grim death (this year, including *Mr. Death*). Santa's smile gives way to the rattling of Marley's Ghost. And all because Dec. 31 is the deadline for Oscar nominations.

So wise up, Academy. Move the deadline to February, when we're all miserable anyway. And let Christmas films be merry and bright.

► MAGNOLIA

STARRING: Tom Cruise, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Julianne Moore, Jason Robards

DIRECTOR: Paul Thomas Anderson

OPENS: Dec. 17 in N.Y.C. and L.A.; wide Jan. 7

PAUL THOMAS ANDERSON IS OUT TO prove the obvious: that we live in a chance universe, that coincidence and mishap play a larger role in our destinies than we like to think. In *Magnolia* he intertwines four disparate (but equally glum) stories of people living in California's San Fernando Valley and shows how they touch—or fail to touch—one another in the course of a single, very long day.

The result is a hard-striving, convo-

luted movie, which never quite becomes the smoothly reciprocating engine Anderson (who did *Boogie Nights*) would like it to be. Indeed, only one of his tales is fully persuasive. That's the one about the Partridge family, which is not to be confused with the nice folks from '70s TV. The patriarch, Earl (Robards), is dying of cancer, a metaphor for decay that Anderson likes too much. Earl's trophy wife (Moore), who married him for his money, has decided she actually loves the old guy and is in a guilty frenzy to prove it. He, meantime, is desperate to reconcile with his estranged son (Cruise), who, under an alias, runs viciously sexist seminars teaching men how to have their way with women. Earl has a nurse (Hoffman) who tries to get everyone what they want before it is too late.

Everything about the Partridges rings tense and true—Moore's brilliantly rendered hysteria, Cruise's near parodistic charisma when he's leading his group and, even more astonishing, the way his biographical falsities, his emotional denials crumble under probing from a gently persistent TV interviewer. Anderson knows and feels for these people in some true, instinctive way.

Everyone else in his movie is, by comparison, an easy construct—a TV host with a guilty secret; his damaged, drugged out daughter; game-show contestants, current and has-been, wrestling with the consequences of brief, cheesy fame; a bumbling cop betrayed by his good nature. These characters are all well played, but we don't fully connect with them. Or, finally, with an endless movie that mostly mistakes inflation for importance.

—By Richard Schickel



DIVINE REVENGE: Fraser and Hopkins

▶▶ TITUS

STARRING: Anthony Hopkins, Jessica Lange, Alan Cumming, Laura Fraser, Harry Lennix

DIRECTOR: Julie Taymor

OPENS: Dec. 25 in N.Y.C. and L.A.; wide in Jan.

SHAKESPEARE HAS CAUGHT A FEW BREAKS at the movies lately. *Romeo and Juliet* and



SURVIVORS: Breen as young Frank, left, aids Carlyle and Watson

▶▶ ANGELA'S ASHES

STARRING: Emily Watson, Robert Carlyle and, as Frank, Joe Breen, Ciaran Owens and Michael Legge
DIRECTOR: Alan Parker **OPENS:** Dec. 25 in N.Y.C. and L.A.; wide in January

NO ONE NEED BOTHER MOCKING OR PITIYING THE IRISH; THEY DO SUCH A GOOD JOB OF it themselves. Frank McCourt beautifully juggled contempt and sympathy in his memoir of growing up poor and wet in Limerick in the '30s and '40s, before squandering the goodwill he had accrued with the taint of *Tis* (it'll be a while before that sour screed is filmed). Parker, who did right by the Irish in *The Commitments*, has a go at the impossible task of adapting *Angela's Ashes* and trying to satisfy all those who loved the book so much that McCourt's painful past miraculously became theirs.

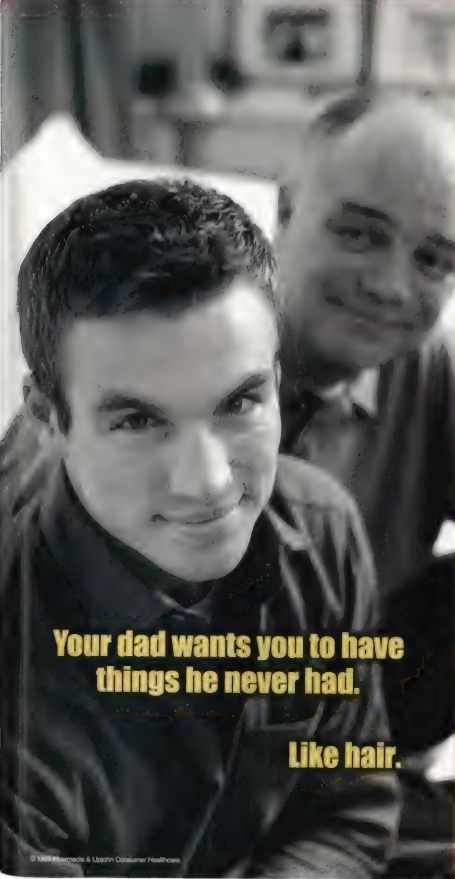
The movie, unable to pack in the book's entire accumulation of incident, is necessarily anecdotal. Frank's mother (Watson) has been slightly sanctified, and Dad (Carlyle) given the lilt of Irish laughter to go with his wastrel ways. But the film has the vitality of remembered truth. Is Frank hungry? He licks a newspaper for the residual grease of the chips it held. Is he sopping? He steps in more puddles than Cene Kelly in *Singin' in the Rain*. (Ten years the family rented the same flooded ground floor, and no one thought to lay a plank from the doorway to the stairs.) The three boys playing Frank at 7, 11 and 15 are fine. They create a collective portrait of a child tough enough to survive a horrendous youth and a man brave enough to recall it.

—By Richard Corliss

Richard III became vigorous films that did honor to both the Bard and the medium. Now Julie Taymor, the magician who on Broadway turned *The Lion King* menagerie into masked enchanters on stilts, takes Shakespeare's goriest play, *Titus Andronicus*, and makes it vivid, relevant and of elevating scariness.

A boy, his face hidden by a paper-bag helmet, plays an improvised war game with toy soldiers on his kitchen table. An explosion startles him, the room bursts into flames, and a giant totes him out of the

late 20th century and into 1st century Rome. Hence, the action will take place in both ages. Imperial warriors, caked with the dust of conquest, tramp through the Coliseum like bulky action figures. Their leader Titus (Hopkins) is a straight-spoken military man of the past; his rival, the emperor Saturninus (Cumming), is pure oil of modern politician, oozing endearments and threats, riding through Rome in an open limo with a bubble top, seizing and betraying Titus' daughter Lavinia (Fraser). Tattoos abound, on the royal Goth



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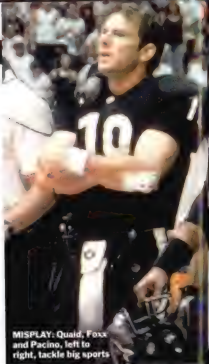
▶ ANY GIVEN SUNDAY

STARRING: Al Pacino, Dennis Quaid, Jamie Foxx, Cameron Diaz
DIRECTOR: Oliver Stone **OPENS:** Dec. 22

BASICALLY, IT'S YOUR MEAN, VERY MEAN, STANDARD SPORTS STORY: AN AGING COACH (PACINO) who is on a losing streak; a great veteran quarterback (Quaid) whose winning spirit has gone south; a cocky kid (Foxx) who needs some life lessons before he can step into the starter's shoes. The up-to-date spin on this tale is provided by the tough and scheming owner (Diaz), who has inherited the team, the Miami Sharks, from her more benign father and wreaks a certain amount of nontraditional havoc before she gets some sort of comeuppance.

Director Oliver Stone, who wrote *Any Given Sunday's* screenplay with John Logan, may be momentarily in a nonpolitical mood, but that does not mean he has given up his preoccupations with paranoia, greed and the brutality of American life. He sees his warriors as innocent animals, the purity of their violent athletic endeavors under constant threat of corruption by people trying to make a buck off their pain. Or, in the case of a particularly noxious sports reporter (John C. McGinley), a know-nothing who thinks he knows it all, just trying to make a name for himself.

McGinley's relationship to the game is interesting. So is Lauren Holly's with the crippled quarterback, finally letting the inner bitch residing beneath her cool jock's-wife beauty savagely surface. The trouble with the movie is its style, all hand-held shots and short, jagged cuts. They're supposed to represent the barely controlled anarchy of the sport (and to let Stone touch on far too many narrative points). But almost three hours of this jitter deteriorates from bravura filmmaking to annoying mannerism, and *Any Given Sunday* ends up less than the sum of its many, often interesting parts. —R.S.



MISPLAY: Quaid, Foxx and Pacino, left to right, tackle big sports

captives led by Tamora (Lange) and on the Moor Aaron (Lennix). A big band plays at Saturninus' Saturnalia; heavy metal accompanies the Goths. A tiger stalks the forest.

Taylor keeps the eye as busy as the ear; she embellishes the story without disfiguring it. There's room in her bestiary for fine performances, a pretty collision of historicist styles. Cumming presides, Lennix schemes, Lange smolders. Then all cede to Hopkins, who, in the suitably grisly finale, serves up Titus as Hannibal Lecter with a noble vengeance. Rare and well done!

Other movies this season have bigger stars, higher budgets, pricier effects, deeper tans. But if you're looking for a complex weave of word and image, and an early clue to where film might go in its second century, your Christmas shopping can begin and end with this towering *Titus*. —R.C.

▶ GIRL, INTERRUPTED

STARRING: Winona Ryder, Angelina Jolie
DIRECTOR: James Mangold
OPENS: Dec. 21 in N.Y.C. and L.A.; wide Jan. 14

SOMETIME IN THE '60S, SUSANNA KAYSSEN was placed in an upscale psychiatric hospital. It appears from *Girl, Interrupted*, the book she wrote about the experience a couple of decades later, that she might have fared just as well as an outpatient. It appears from the movie version that we would have fared just as well if Hollywood had regarded the book as unadaptable.

LOONEY TUNES: Ryder, right, gives a first-rate performance, but Jolie, left, is off-key

It's not that director (and final-draft writer) James Mangold has botched the job. It's just that he made something rather conventional out of a memoir that was spare, terse and elliptically funny. And naturally, the film's attitude toward its patients is the only acceptable one these days: that they may be saner than their keepers—especially since this is the '60s, when the outside world is so crazy.

Call that the not-so-new sentimentalism. But call Ryder's performance as Kay- sen first rate. She moves very persuasively from puzzled, rather passive resentment over her incarceration to a lively awareness of her problems to, finally, edg- mental health. Jolie is more problematic as her best friend, an overt rebel whose assertiveness leads to the movie's most tragic—and heavily fictionalized—passage. There is something tiresome in her tough- ness. But that's emblematic of the whole movie, which misses what was most engaging about Kay- sen's memoir—the unique sound of her voice, mostly drowned out here by too familiar attitudes and melodrama. —R.S.



▶ THE HURRICANE

STARRING: Denzel Washington
DIRECTOR: Norman Jewison
OPENS: limited Dec. 29; wide Jan. 14

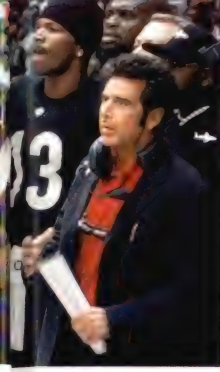


FORCEFUL: Washington projects Carter's outrage as well as his inner strength

MAYBE RUBIN CARTER WAS A HURRICANE in the ring, but the movie version of his story—the middleweight contender who was framed on murder charges based on racism—downgrades him to a tropical storm. In Washington's finely shaded performance he's a low-pressure system, illuminated by distant flashes of lightning.

Despite what you might imagine, this is not a bad thing. For once he absorbed the outrage of false conviction, Carter turned fiercely inward. He wrote a good autobiography about his case, read spiritually uplifting books and learned to avoid everyone who might offer him false hope. He had to find the strength to endure entirely within himself.

The austerity of Carter's prison life



does not offer many opportunities for electrifying moviemaking, but *The Hurricane* is nevertheless a thoughtful and even inspiring film. That's not just because of the way it celebrates Carter's self-discipline, but because the director, Norman Jewison, enforces the contrast between his stoicism and the efforts of the unlikely team of '60s activists that eventually came to his rescue.

There were nine of them in reality, just three of them in the movie (for the sake of narrative convenience), and their relentless determination to free a man they came to know only after they took up his cause is impressive. That's especially so since they are led by a teenage black youth, Lesra Martin (very well played by Vicellous Reon Shannon), who happens to pick up Carter's book, enters into correspondence with him and then drags his Canadian guardians into the long, complicated fight to redeem him. He's an irresistible kid, maybe the only sort of person who could break down Carter's wall of reserve. *The Hurricane* may be a little too leisurely in its development, but the unlikely triumph of Carter's saviors is an authentically moving one.

—R.S.

▶ CRADLE WILL ROCK

STARRING: Ruben Blades, John Cusack, Cary Elwes, Cherry Jones, Angus MacFayden, Bill Murray, Susan Sarandon, Emily Watson
DIRECTOR: Tim Robbins
OPENS: Dec. 8 in N.Y.C. and L.A.; wide Dec. 25

NO AGE WAS SO TOWERING THAT A CYNIC

CINEMA

looking back could not have contempt for it. To re-create the bustling, politically contentious '30s, when a young Orson Welles tried to stage the socialist musical *The Cradle Will Rock* with federal funding, Robbins has splashed a couple of dozen real people onto a garish movie mural, Diego Rivera-style. While Welles (MacFayden) and producer John Houseman (Elwes) try to persuade their government patron (Jones) not to cancel the show, Nelson Rockefeller (Cusack) romances Rivera (Blades), then literally trashes his work. There's also a young actress (Watson), an old ventriloquist (Murray), a swank saleswoman for fascism (Sarandon)—just about anyone who was alive then, and dabbling in the arts, is in this too-much of a movie.

How could it have failed? With a smugness that smothers the actors' energy and obliterates the historical reality. Welles is a pompous oaf, and Houseman his toady. The rich are scheming, the poor artists clichés of do-gooder striving. These are caricatures drawn so violently that one sees blotches of ink instead of quick, deft lines. Perhaps, in the long view, we are all idiots. But we don't need a 60-year perspective to see Robbins' attitude revealed in all its meanness of spirit. If he hated these people so, why did he waste his time and ours putting them on film?

—R.C.

▶ SNOW FALLING ON CEDARS

STARRING: Ethan Hawke, Youki Kudoh, Rick Yune, Max von Sydow
DIRECTOR: Scott Hicks
OPENS: limited Dec. 22; wide Jan. 7

SNOW FALLING ON CEDARS IS ESSENTIALLY a liberal soap opera. Its simple, anti-prejudice message is hidden (in David Guterson's novel) behind dense thicket of rich, writerly prose and a narrative that moves large numbers of characters back and forth in time as it proceeds, in its leisurely way, to solve the murder mystery that serves as its none-too-robust pace-maker. Readers in the millions took the book seriously because Guterson was so serious about it, though it did not hurt that his setting—an island in Puget Sound, before, during and immediately after World War II—was fresh and exotic.

Director Scott Hicks' version is faithful to the story's main beats. There's Ishmael, the physically and emotionally wounded hero (Hawke); Hatsue (Kudoh), the forbidden and then lost love of his childhood; her husband Kazuo (Yune), charged with killing an Anglo neighbor after a land dispute; and all kinds of characters who be-



COLD COMFORT: Hawke tries, in vain, to hold on to Kudoh and their past romance

have well and badly as his trial unveils the community's hatreds and suspicions.

Screen time is different from novel time, and it takes a lot of it for Ishmael to rediscover his "good heart" and bring forth the hidden truth that will free the accused. While he dawdles and moons, the wind starts to whistle through the story's riggings and we begin to suspect that there was always less in it than met an eye distracted by Guterson's fancy writing.

—R.S.

▶ TOPSY-TURVY

STARRING: Jim Broadbent, Allan Corduner
DIRECTOR: Mike Leigh
OPENS: Dec. 24

IT'S 1884, AND GILBERT AND SULLIVAN NEED a hit. *Princess Ida* is just not doing the sort of business they're used to. But Sullivan (Corduner) wants to write something more serious than comic operettas. And Gilbert (Broadbent) keeps trying to recycle stale story lines that his collaborator (and the critics) dismiss.

Their solution to this problem—based on Gilbert's chance encounter with Japanese culture at a London exhibition—turns out to be *The Mikado*. And Mike Leigh's movie about mounting that best of all G. & S. works turns out to be one of the year's more beguiling surprises. It is not at all the sort of thing one expects from Leigh, the very sober creator of films like *Naked and Secrets and Lies*; for it is basically the story—somewhat comic, somewhat desperate, very carefully detailed—of rehearsing and putting on the operetta.

What gives *Topsy-Turvy* its heartfelt heft is the way in which it shows how this process takes over everyone's life—eventually driving out all distractions, whether they be Gordon's defeat at Khartoum, the sterilities of Gilbert's marriage or the many anxious neuroses of the acting company. It



MUSIC MEN: Broadbent, left, and Corduner bring the operetta kings to life

is show biz as therapy, with all tensions temporarily resolved when the show is a hit. But there is also a sense of real, very Mike Leighish, life in this film that darkens and transforms it. And transfixes us. —R.S.

▶▶ THE EMPEROR AND THE ASSASSIN

STARRING: Gong Li, Zhang Fengyi, Li Xuejian
DIRECTOR: Chen Kaige
OPENS: Dec. 17 in N.Y.C. and L.A.; wide Jan. 21

IN HOLLYWOOD THESE DAYS, A SPECTACLE is what some randy star makes of himself at 3 a.m. on Sunset Boulevard. American movies have lost the love of grandeur, of finding the heroic scale of historical figures. Chen Kaige to the rescue! China's longest-reigning angry young filmmaker has an eye for rapturous compositions on a huge and telling tapestry. His new film mixes DeMille and Dostoyevsky: the cast-of-thousands splendor of a biblical epic and the gnarled psychology of Chen's own *Farewell My Concubine*. And all in less time than a Stephen King prison drama.

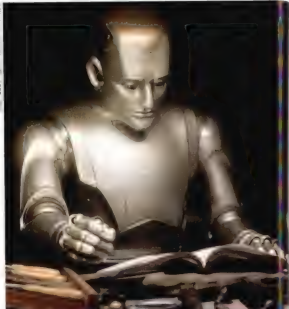
The Emperor and the Assassin, set in the 3rd century B.C., relates the struggle of Ying Zheng (Li) to unify China and become its first emperor. His aims are honorable, his methods increasingly brutal; he might be the prototype for Lenin or Mao. Ying sends his lover Lady Zhao (Gong) to her Han homeland. Her mission is to find a professional killer (Zhang, in a potent turn) to fake an assassination attempt, whose "failure" will make Ying seem invincible to his adversaries. But Ying grows more ruthless, and the lady and the killer fall in love. Now they will try to put an end to

▶▶ BICENTENNIAL MAN

STARRING: Robin Williams, Embeth Davidtz, Sam Neill, Oliver Platt, Halle Kate Ersenberg
DIRECTOR: Chris Columbus **OPENS:** Dec. 17

TO LOVE YOUR MECHANICAL playmate is an agreeable, G-rated notion; that's *Toy Story*. To want to have sex with it: that's the premise of Robin Williams' latest foray into ickiness. As Andrew, the robot with a heart, he beguiles the family that buys him in the year 2005. Beneath the plastic casing, he is really a middle-aged gentleman, sweet of disposition, wryly amusing, sympathetic to women—hey, is this guy gay? Not at all: Andrew wants the love of a good woman. Davidtz plays his first keeper-girlfriend and her granddaughter, who is eager to touch the soul of this machine.

The result isn't quite as awful as you'd expect from the star of *Patch Adams* and the director of *Stepmom*, 1998's most tasteless glops of Christmas treacle. Williams restrained is a tad more endurable than Williams rampant. But in this uneasy mix of noble aphorisms and fart jokes, the tone is cloying, the running time bloated. Will someone in the near future please invent a Robin Williams movie worth sitting through? —R.C.



ROBIN THE ROBOT: Williams mixes homilies and fart jokes

the emperor's dynasty before it begins.

The film may confuse those unfamiliar with Chinese history, but never mind. Just pay heed to the glorious moviemaking. There is one scene that haunts the heart: an ethereally beautiful blind girl (Xun Zhou) kills herself after the assassin has eradicated the rest of her family. Few directors can create such indelible imagery; Chen does it in nearly every frame. —R.C.

▶▶ MR. DEATH: THE RISE AND FALL OF FRED A. LEUCHTER JR.

DIRECTOR: Errol Morris
OPENS: Dec. 29 in N.Y.C. and L.A.; wide in Jan.

TO DO GOOD YOU DON'T NEED A GRADUATE degree, just a smart idea. To do harm you don't need bad intentions, just a plodding arrogance. Those truisms are at the heart of the latest documentary thriller from artful Errol Morris (*The Thin Blue Line*, *A Short History of Time*). Fred Leuchter

won renown for devising more "humane" electric chairs, gallows and gas chambers. Now considered an expert in all aspects of state torture, Leuchter was hired by Ernst Zundel, a prominent denier of the Holocaust, to use his expertise to determine if the Nazi concentration camps had in fact been death camps. Leuchter went to Auschwitz with his bride (it was their honeymoon!) and discovered no trace of cyanide. His methods were faulty, his conclusions insane. He was discredited and, suddenly, unemployed.

Morris, an elegant and scrupulous filmmaker, is fair both to Leuchter and his aggrieved accusers. The movie makes clear that Mr. Death's sin was not race hatred but hubris; he simply could not, does not, doubt his qualifications to do a job beyond his expertise. Morris takes this quietly agitated fellow (he consumes about 40 cups of coffee and 100 cigarettes a day) at face value, letting Leuchter explain how tinkering with science led to his rise and fall. It's the fascinating film equivalent of a humane execution. —R.C.



MAJESTIC: Zhang, left, attempts to kill his sovereign and rival, Li

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

CASE NO. 99-0679-CW-W-6

PAUL HEILMAN; JOHN KELLER; ROBERT LYNE, AMY PEASH, JENNY TAYLOR, and
STEVEN AND ANN YANKOPOULOS, INDIVIDUALLY AS NAMED PLAINTIFFS, AND ON
BEHALF OF ALL OTHERS SIMILARLY SITUATED; AND OTHER INDIVIDUAL PLAINTIFFS.

CLASS ACTION

PLAINTIFFS

VS.

PERFECTION CORPORATION, RHEEM MANUFACTURING COMPANY,
AMERICAN WATER HEATER COMPANY, BRADFORD WHITE CORPORATION,
A.O. SMITH CORPORATION, LOCHINVAR CORPORATION, and STATE INDUSTRIES, INC.

DEFENDANTS

NOTICE OF PROPOSED CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT AND HEARING THEREON

TO: ALL OWNERS OF WATER HEATERS CONTAINING A DIP TUBE MANUFACTURED, SUPPLIED OR SOLD
BY PERFECTION CORPORATION BETWEEN AUGUST 1993 AND OCTOBER 1996

THIS NOTICE MAY AFFECT YOUR RIGHTS. PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY.

This Notice is to inform you of a proposed Settlement of a lawsuit involving claims against the nation's major water heater manufacturers, A.O. Smith Corporation, American Water Heater Company, Bradford White Corporation, Lochinvar Corporation, Rheem Manufacturing Company, and State Industries, Inc. (the "Tank Manufacturers"). The Settlement is related to a component part for a water heater called a "dip tube." These allegedly defective dip tubes were manufactured by Perfection Corporation ("Perfection") between August 1993 and October 1996. A dip tube is a piece of polypropylene plastic tubing that delivers a flow of cold water in a water heater so that it will produce hot water. Signs of a defective dip tube include loss of hot water volume and pressure and the appearance of tiny white or gray particles in the hot water supply.

Who is Affected by the Settlement

You are affected by the Settlement if you own or have owned a water heater manufactured by a Tank Manufacturer containing a dip tube manufactured by Perfection between August 1993 and October 1996.

Terms of the Settlement

Benefits under the Settlement are provided in two parts. Part I applies to those Class members who have incurred out-of-pocket expenses to repair or replace a defective dip tube or damaged property caused by a defective dip tube, and who have not been fully compensated. Reimbursement damages in the sum of \$175 or less are presumed reasonable, and will be paid to the Class Member. Reimbursement damages more than \$175 will be referred to the Special Circumstances Panel. The Panel will decide reimbursement on a case-by-case basis.

Part II of the Settlement applies to Class Members who have not yet incurred out-of-pocket expenses, or whose dip tube related problems have not been fully remedied. Class members under Part II are entitled to the following benefits: (1) a certificate for a dip tube replacement; and (2) associated repairs and service. These associated repairs and services include flushing of plumbing lines and cleaning of plumbing fixtures. Property damage claims in addition to a Subject Dip Tube and resulting clogged plumbing lines and fixtures and decreased hot water volume and pressure will be referred to the Special Circumstances Panel for adjudication.

The Special Circumstances Panel will be composed of certified plumbers and other qualified professionals who are experienced and knowledgeable about water heaters and attendant plumbing related damages. The Panel will be appointed by the parties, and will be approved by the Court.

Benefits under the Settlement are not limited or capped in any way. Class members may file claims under either Part I or Part II or both, as applicable.

How and When Claims Will Be Processed

Class members seeking reimbursement for past repairs and associated damages must file a Proof of Claim on or before June 30, 2000. Class members seeking a dip tube replacement and associated repairs have until December 31, 2000 to file their Proof of Claim.

To receive more information on the claims process and a copy of the Proof of Claim form, call the number listed below, or write to the address listed below or visit the Web site listed below. You must fill out a Proof of Claim form to receive benefits under this Settlement.

Participation in the Settlement

If you own or have owned a water heater covered by the Settlement, you are considered a Class Member of the Settlement. As such, you will be bound by all orders and judgments of the Court and will be barred from prosecuting any legal action relating to the Settled Claims. **If you do not wish to participate in or be bound by the Settlement, you must exclude yourself in writing as described in the Mailed Notice.** If you exclude yourself, you will not be entitled to benefits under the Settlement.

How to Comment or Object

If you do not exclude yourself, you may comment or object to the terms of the Settlement. The Mailed Notice describes how to submit objections. You have the right to appear at the April 21, 2000 final fairness hearing in person or through counsel, although you do not have to.

Who Represents You

The Court appointed Ralph K. Phalen of Independence, Missouri and Ben Barnow of Chicago, Illinois to serve as co-lead Class Counsel and appointed Class Representatives. You do not have to pay the Court appointed lawyers. Class Counsel will apply to the Court for attorneys' fees and costs of not more than \$5,650,000. This amount is separate and apart from the relief provided under the Settlement to the Class.

The Court will hold a final fairness hearing on the proposed Settlement and the fee and cost applications on April 21, 2000 at 10:00 a.m. in the courtroom of the Honorable Howard F. Sachs, Senior District Judge, at the United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri, 400 East Ninth Street, Kansas City, Missouri. This hearing may be continued without further notice.

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BOX 9338, GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK 11530-9338 OR CALL:
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2004-05-05

rate

CONCLUSIONS

TABLE 1

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1. 1995

(continued)

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AMY DICKINSON

Yes, Virginia...

As our kids become more skeptical at an earlier age, what should we say about Santa Claus?

WE LIVE IN A RATIONAL, FULL-DISCLOSURE WORLD. Experts and other smarty-pants like me are always talking about how we parents have to be absolutely truthful with our children and meet every question

with detailed answers, complete with footnotes and helpful websites. Because of this, our kids know where babies come from and that a rainbow is just light refracted through water droplets. Maybe this is a good thing, but it sure has taken some of the magic out of parenting, not to mention child-

hood. Christmas, however, is a time when believers in the plain truth should consider applying some varnish. Parents might want to explain away the Tooth Fairy, the Easter Bunny, Elvis' ghost and E.T. But we shouldn't be too literal about Santa Claus.

Kids ages 3 to 6 love the mystery and surprise of Christmas, but at about age 7, they begin to knock holes in the Santa scenario. Maybe they've heard something from an older child, or they've started doing the math themselves, calculating the number of chimneys worldwide versus the maximum speed of a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer. You know your kid is a doubter if he comes in holding a globe and a calculator and wearing an expression that says, "We have to talk."

Ed Downey works as a professional Santa in December and as a Jerry Garcia impersonator the rest of the time (he has a full, tuggable beard). Downey told me that every good professional Santa deals with skeptics by deflection, and I think that's a good idea at home too. When your child asks you pointed questions, ask him what he thinks about the holiday, what he thinks it's really about, and what he likes most about it. If your child presses you on specifics—"How come you and Santa have the same wrapping paper?" is one of my favorites—Downey suggests you assure him that Santa has helped from a lot of people, including you.

Richard Eyre, father of nine and author of *Teaching Our Children Values*, says he introduced the concept of "real/imaginary" to his children when they

were little. "The birth of Jesus is real/real," he says. "It's an actual historical event that we celebrate. Invisible friends are imaginary/imaginary. Santa Claus is real/imaginary. He's in-between." Eyre says his kids were relieved to be offered an option of believing in the spirit of Christmas without having to be too literal about Santa Claus,

and that the tradition of real/imaginary has been passed on to his grandchildren.

Families who need to brush up on holiday skepticism should do themselves a favor and rent *Miracle on 34th Street*. (The original 1947 movie, starring a very young Natalie Wood, is wonderful.) Another great source of inspiration for parents and kids is the original "Yes, Virginia, There Is a Santa Claus," an editorial

written by Francis P. Church for the *New York Sun* in 1897, in response to a doubting letter from Virginia O'Hanlon, 8. The essay is available at www.about.com and in an illustrated book version published by Delacorte Press.

When my daughter pressed me on the Santa question, I told her that while I can't prove that there is a Santa, I also can't prove that there isn't one. I reminded her that we often believe in things, like God, that we can't see. And I told her, quite honestly, that every Christmas morning yields surprises for all of us, even grownups, if we're lucky enough to still believe. ■

For more on kids and Santa, please see our website at time.com/personal. You can send Amy an e-mail at timefamily@aol.com

IN BRIEF

ROSEBUD SAFETY TIPS For many kids, the best part of winter is a good sled ride down a snowy slope. To keep the thrill safe, the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons is urging parents to supervise the fun—and to put helmets on children under 12. Each year about 7,000 kids suffer head injuries in sledding crashes. Younger children are especially vulnerable because they have proportionally larger heads, higher centers of gravity and less developed coordination. For a brochure on how to sled safely, call 800-824-2663.



MEMORY CHECK The Alzheimer's Association is urging families to take advantage of holiday reunions to assess elderly relatives for that most delicate of problems: memory loss. An association poll reveals, however, that 1 in 2 persons incorrectly believes normal forgetfulness could be Alzheimer's. To provide some better guidance, the group is offering a booklet of warning signs to those who call 800-272-3900. Among the disease's indicators: preparing a meal and forgetting to serve it; putting things in wrong places, such as a watch in a sugar bowl.

GET IN THE BACK Where should kids under 13 be seated in the car? The government strongly recommends the backseat, especially if there is a front-passenger air bag. Yet a new England study in December's *Pediatrics* journal shows that kids are being ferried in the front seat in nearly a quarter of vehicles (in 1 of 6 equipped with a passenger air bag, and in 1 of 3 without one). During the heavy-driving holiday season, safety experts urge parents to heed carefully the well-known seating precaution. —By Alain L. Sanders



Is there a relationship between Lycopene and a healthy prostate?

If you've heard about Lycopene but aren't sure what it is, it's an antioxidant. Antioxidants, as you probably know, are an important part of the body's cell-protection system. This is due to their ability to neutralize free radicals, highly-reactive and unstable molecules that can cause significant cellular damage. Many scientists now believe that this cellular damage, along with other factors, may lead to

the development of a number of chronic diseases.

Currently, a number of recent studies have reported an association between lycopene-rich diets and a reduced risk of prostate cancer. Tomatoes and tomato paste have a high concentration of lycopene, and pink grapefruit and watermelon are also excellent sources of lycopene.

If you're concerned about prostate health, it may be a

good idea to make sure you're getting enough of these fruits and vegetables. In addition to the proper diet, a healthy regimen should include regular exercise, not smoking and visits to your doctor for regular medical checkups.



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JAMES CRAMER

Market Rotisserie

Spending too much time picking this week's NFL games? Switch to stocks and learn something

IF WE TRADED JUST PROCTER & GAMBLE AND BRISTOL Myers at Cramer Berkowitz, we could know them inside out. But we wouldn't make much, let alone beat the averages. All the action in this year's market has been in stocks of the moment, those newly minted dotcoms or dotcom-related issues that seem to soar 30 and 40 points at a clip. There's only one problem with owning them. Call us old-fashioned, but we like to know more about stocks than their symbols and past trajectories.

We like to know what the companies behind them do, what areas they are trying to dominate and what business cycles might hold them hostage. In short, we like to know as much about them as, say, the teams we pick each week in the pro-football Rotisserie League we fret so much about around the office.

So, in one of our wackier moments—racking our brains about how to force ourselves to learn these great new companies, with market capitalizations already north of \$10 billion—we resorted to a Rotisserie League of our own, a stock Rotisserie League. In our league, which focuses on companies that help other companies mine the Internet (called business-to-business), we draft and play real-live stocks with a mythical million-dollar pool.

The results have been spectacular. My sparring partner, my associate Matt Jacobs, and I, forced to pick 10 "teams" each to compete in the B2B Rotisserie League, have crash-coursed the whole 1999 new-stock lineup. We make our mistakes with phony money and save the real deal for the portfolio. Our draft may have lacked the tension of the NFL's live ESPN version, but it turned up such gems as VeriSign, Commerce One and Ariba, companies that until I had to lay out 750 Gs of Rotisserie money, I couldn't do much more than oggle from afar. And in the B2B league there's no team I have to lose money on every week, as I do with the Eagles, my hometown fave. I'm emotionally incapable of betting against them. I don't think I could have learned these companies fast enough without facing the prospect of

looking stupid against my fellow coach. And if I hadn't, I would have missed a couple of 50-point moves in real life from application of my Rotisserie knowledge.

Of course, it helps that we picked the hottest sport in the stock market to create our league around. Both of our teams (see thetstreet.com for the rosters) have had big moves since their inception a month ago. But I know we would have sat out most of the real action in the likes of CMGI and Internet Capital Group—two league phenoms—had my associate not taken them in the top rounds of our mock draft.

It's funny. I always tell people that if they would just spend the same amount of time analyzing the stock market that they do the sports pages, they could make a fortune picking stocks. Now, given the time I spent setting up my league—vs. the rigor of picking 14 teams in my Fantasy Football League this weekend—I have the proof. Just as in sports, youth matters. As of last Friday, my 23-year-old associate Matt is up 26.1% to my 19%, helped by a 50% jump in his Internet Capital Group. I'm being hurt by AskJeeves, down 17% since I picked it. Ah, but there is good news. In the real world we own them both. And Internet Capital Group has more than made up for the Jeeves shortfall.

Cramer is a hedge-fund manager and writes for thetstreet.com. This column should not be construed as advice to buy or sell stocks. Cramer currently holds positions in ARBA, ORCL, BEAS, SEBL, TIBX, YRSN, VERT, VIAN, ICCE, ASKY and BMY.



IN BRIEF

MAX OUT YOUR ACCOUNT At tax time next spring, be sure to review your 1999 medical expenses. Self-employed individuals and employees of companies with 50 or fewer workers have until April 15 to make tax-free contributions to medical savings accounts, which can be used with high-deductible health plans to pay medical costs. "You want to make sure you've contributed the maximum allowable," says Jack Strayer of the National Center for Policy Analysis. The ceilings range from \$2,250 for individuals to \$4,500 for families.



BACK TO SCHOOL Thanks to a law President Clinton signed last week, employees whose companies pay college expenses now have more time to complete their course work. The legislation extends employer-paid educational assistance that was to run out next May until Jan. 1, 2002. Employees can receive up to \$5,250 a year tax-free for their undergraduate expenses, including tuition, books and fees. Companies typically provide the money as a reimbursement for employees after a course has been completed. About 1.5 million U.S. workers are enrolled under the plan.



DON'T DO IT! If you're feeling strapped for cash this holiday season, here's a word of caution about so-called payday loans from high-interest lenders: Don't even think about it. These single-payment loans, which are legal in some 30 states, can be more than you bargain for and carry an interest charge that amounts to 500% on an annualized basis. "This is no different than taking a cash advance on your credit card," says Jean A. Fox of the Consumer Federation of America. "It's just more expensive." Anyone in a cash crunch would do better to seek a credit counselor, take out a long-term loan or make arrangements with a creditor to stretch out payments. —By Alex M. Pascual





CHRISTINE GORMAN

After the Party

The best way to avoid a hangover is to go easy on the grog. But if you don't, try these remedies

WHETHER YOU THINK THE WORLD'S COMING TO AN end in the next two weeks or the Y2K bug is a bust, one thing is certain. Come Jan. 1, millions of millennium-happy revelers will be nursing

Apocalypse-size hangovers. Despite thousands of years of experience with the effects of overindulging, however, there are no perfect remedies to heal their headaches or tame their tummies. In fact, most scientists won't even consider searching for a hangover cure for fear of what might

happen if they succeed. But there are a few things you can do—and one or two things you should absolutely avoid—to soften the worst effects of too much alcohol.

First, some background. By the time you start experiencing a hangover, most of the alcohol is already gone from your system. That's one reason doctors speculate that hangovers are actually a mild form of withdrawal. Other factors that influence just how bad you feel range from the amount of sleep you got to whatever else you ate or drank during your night's carousing.

Drinking moderately or not at all is of course your best bet for a problem-free New Year's Day. And we'll just assume you know better than to drink and drive. But if you do get plastered, be sure to quaff plenty of water, since alcohol acts like a diuretic, flushing fluids out of your system. A good rule of thumb is to drink a glass of water for every glass of wine or beer you have, and more for hard liquor.

In general, carbohydrates are your friends. Alcohol affects the way your body metabolizes nutrients, causing many people's blood sugar to drop. You may not fancy the idea of eating solid food the morning after, but nibbling on some crackers or a piece of bread should help overcome your sugar blues. And you shouldn't drink on an empty stomach. Imbibing during a meal slows absorption of alcohol and gives your body more time to detoxify it.

Although it may not be possible on New Year's Eve, it's usually a good idea to go to bed at a decent hour. Even teetotalers

tend to feel a bit hung over if they stay up all night. Don't be surprised, however, if you wake up a couple of hours after you fall asleep. Your brain counteracts alcohol's sedative effects by becoming more excited.

Whatever you do, don't make yourself throw up. "Vomiting on an empty stomach—which is usually the case with a hangover—can create potentially dangerous tears in the esophagus," says Dr. Robert Swift, an alcohol researcher at Brown University. He recommends Pepto-Bismol if you're feeling nauseated.

Don't take Tylenol or other acetaminophen-based drugs for your headache, since they can prove toxic in combination with alcohol (or if you already have liver damage). Avoid taking other pain relievers, such as aspirin or ibuprofen, that will irritate the stomach lining even more, or at the very least, make sure they're buffered.

Most hangovers are pretty much done in a day, but be alert to the possibility of life-threatening complications. Many people fall and injure themselves after drinking too much. Blows to the head in particular can be very dangerous and may lead to internal bleeding in the brain. Persistent stomach pain or uncontrolled vomiting is another sign that you need emergency care.

Hmm. A quiet New Year's Eve at home is starting to sound better and better. ■

For more information on hangovers, visit time.com/personal. You can send e-mail for Christine to gorman@time.com



"Not much—just flushing out my arteries."

GOOD NEWS

AIDS UPDATE The AIDS drug cocktail may have just got better. Replacing protease inhibitors—the medication that first lifted the death sentence for thousands of AIDS patients—with a new drug, Sustiva, seems to reduce HIV to undetectable levels in 50% more patients. Sustiva benefits kids too. When added to cocktails that contain protease inhibitors, it doubles the chances that the virus will be undetectable. Another big advantage: unlike protease inhibitors, Sustiva need be taken only once a day.

HOT-WIRED TOTS What's better for a child with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder—behavior therapy or medications like Ritalin? The answer is, well, complicated. A new report shows medication alone or combined with therapy is decidedly more effective than therapy alone in reducing overt symptoms of ADHD—the off-the-wall jumpiness and inattentiveness that exhausted parents know all too well. But combining drugs with behavior therapy seems to benefit kids in ways that drugs alone don't—like enabling them to make friends more easily and even score higher on achievement tests.



BAD NEWS

SMOKE SCREAM Still need a reason to quit smoking? Try this: puffing away quadruples the risk that you may suddenly suffer shortness of breath, heart palpitations, and overwhelming feelings of anxiety—in short, a panic attack. What's the link? Lungs of smokers tend to be overinflated, which may make smokers more vulnerable to attacks. Kick the habit, and the increased risk vanishes.

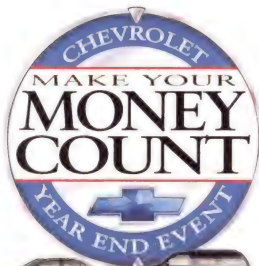


PILL POLICE Folks who suffer from heart disease are often advised to take a daily aspirin to prevent future problems. Simple enough. But now, astonishingly, research suggests that more than 1 million patients aren't swallowing aspirin at all. Instead, they're taking Tylenol, Advil and other painkillers. That's bad. Aspirin works by preventing platelets from sticking together. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) has no effect whatsoever on platelets, and ibuprofen (Advil and others) helps unstick platelets, but only for short periods of time.

—By Janice M. Horowitz

Sources: David Ho—*New England Journal of Medicine* (12/16/99); Archives of General Psychiatry (12/99); Bad News—*Archives of General Psychiatry* (12/99); Medication

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A Crystal Ball

We the people don't ask for much—enough food, adequate shelter and a mildly entertaining Oscar-night show that gets us to bed before sunrise. Hollywood, in all its benevolence, is hard at work on granting us the latter. The producers of next year's Academy Awards show, husband-and-wife team Lili and Richard Zanuck, made a public plea this month to intermittent emcee **BILLY CRYSTAL**, who last year ceded the hosting duties to Whoopi Goldberg. "It's the one thing people agree on—they all want Billy," said Lili (kindly refraining from adding, "just not in any more of those *City Slickers* movies"). Heeding our quality-of-life needs, Crystal last week consented to the gig. The Zanucks, producing the show for the first time, have pledged to trim the numbingly protracted broadcast. High on their list of priorities: nixing the perennially misbegotten dance routines. Crystal, yes; dance numbers, no. They don't call Hollywood the dream factory for nothing.



MARTIN MURPHY/RETNA

THE HYPE OF FASHION

It won't be in stores until March, but the hottest dress of next season has already won friends in high-profile places. The python-print frock made its debut in Milan last September at Gucci's Spring/Summer 2000

show. Within days, *Vanity Fair* had secured a one-sleeved prototype to (almost) adorn **CAMERON DIAZ** in its current issue, and Brazilian model **GISELE BÜNDCHEN** showcased a version with a daring plunge on the cover of the latest *Harper's Bazaar*. The dress has been making the party rounds as well. A newly brunette **GWYNETH PALTROW** wore it to a gala for the Metropolitan Museum's Costume Institute, and Heather Locklear had one made in pink to wear as host of the VM1 Fashion Awards. Befitting its stature, the dress has garnered its own urban legend: a sample was allegedly abducted en route from Gucci to the manufacturers. Could the new trend among the style conscious be to wear only gowns with a really colorful back story?



TIM MCGEE/RETNA



CAN THEY SNATCH VICTORY FROM THE JAWS OF DEFEAT?

Last week, after what it deemed an appropriate time out, NBC rehired Marv Albert as its lead NBA announcer for next season. How have infamous biters fared in their public rehabilitation?



MARV ALBERT



CHRISTIAN SLATER



MIKE TYSON



THE PIT BULL

TRANSGRESSION

Pleaded guilty to assault in September 1997 for biting an ex-lover

Charged with biting a man in the stomach in August 1997

Bit off part of Evander Holyfield's ear in a June 1997 fight

A rash of injurious biting incidents since the mid-1980s

CONSEQUENCE

Fired from NBC

Three months in a minimum-security prison

Barred from boxing and fined \$3 million

Many people fear the breed

REHABILITATION

Rehired by NBC last week

One movie and a Broadway role, both in fall 1998

Reinstated in October 1998

Ongoing attempts to prove it's cuddly

TOTAL CAREER RECOVERY TIME

A little more than two years

14 months

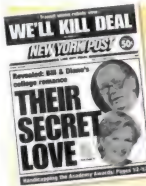
Moot; he's still misbehaving

Still pending

ANDREA RENAUDI/RETNA; PHOTOS: STEVE GRANITZ/RETNA; CHRISTOPHER F. YOUNG/RETNA; ANITA/RETNA



ANDREA RENAUDI/RETNA



PUTTING THE DATE IN DATELINE

In a journalistic coincidence most likely never encountered by Sam Donaldson or David Brinkley, **DIANE SAWYER** last week found herself interviewing a presidential candidate who happened to be a former squeeze. During a segment on *Good Morning America*, Sawyer conversed with Democratic contender **BILL BRADLEY**, whom, it turns out, she briefly dated in the mid-1960s while both were in college (she at Wellesley, he at Princeton). Given that the youthful romance sputtered almost 35 years ago, it seems the two, now both happily married to others, saw no reason to inform viewers of their collegiate coupling. But after the *Washington Post* mentioned the connection in a brief item, the *New York Post* ran with it. Said an ABC spokeswoman: "I think you should get a pass on college romances."



IT TURNS OUT THE CLUB IS NOT A GREAT INVESTMENT

If the current spate of sober-minded, Oscar-soliciting movies leaves your pulse unquicken, take heart. The action-blockbuster season is but six months away. Among the crop will be *Gone in 60 Seconds*, a story of nimble car thieves starring **NICOLAS CAGE** and **ANGELINA JOLIE** and produced by Jerry Bruckheimer, a man with a demonstrated fondness for blowing things up. Cage plays Randall ("Memphis") Murphy, a retired automobile abductor forced to thief again when his brother meets up with the wrong sort of people. For the role, Cage took courses in race-car driving as well as the art of picking a lock. He reports that car-stealing techniques have advanced little over the years. "What's fascinating," he says, "is that most cars are stolen with a simple butter knife."



WINNER

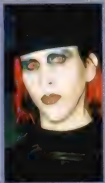
Feud of the Week

NAME: Christina Ricci
OCCUPATION: *Sleepy Hollow* actress

BEST PUNCH: Said of Manson's band: "I hate the things they preach... They found a gimmick that sells... The fact that they're making money off all these teenage kids who actually believe in their message is disgusting."

NAME: Marilyn Manson
OCCUPATION: Creepy, hollow-eyed singer

BEST PUNCH: Said of Ricci on his website: "I actually liked the way [she was] abused in *Buffalo 66*... She's going to need to make a few more stops at the salad bar if she really, really wants to look like my girlfriend."



FEELING FINE

ROBIN WILLIAMS' new film, *Bicentennial Man*, opened last week. It seems an appropriate moment to look at his career arc.

MORK & MINDY

Played: an alien who learns how to feel human

MOSCOW ON THE HUDSON

Played: a Russian defector who learns how to feel American

GOOD MORNING, VIETNAM

Played: a radio deejay who helps soldiers not to be afraid of how they feel

DEAD POETS SOCIETY

Played: a teacher who helps students to feel

AWAKENINGS

Played: a doctor who helps the comatose temporarily feel

THE FISHER KING

Played: a homeless man who helps a deejay learn how to feel

GOOD WILL HUNTING

Played: a psychiatrist who helps a troubled young man express how he feels

PATCH ADAMS

Played: a doctor who helps the medical establishment learn how to feel

BICENTENNIAL MAN

Plays: a robot who learns how to feel



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Charles Krauthammer

A Second American Century?

The U.S. stands supreme. The struggle to overthrow it is the story of tomorrow

LAST WEEK'S HANDOVER OF THE PANAMA CANAL NEATLY brackets the American Century. It begins with Theodore Roosevelt conceiving the canal and, with it, America ascending to the rank of Great Power. It ends with America so great a power, so serenely dominant in the world, that it can give away T.R.'s strategic jewel with hardly a notice.

But if the 20th century was the American century, the 1990s—bracketed by demonstrations of overwhelming American power in Kuwait and Kosovo—were the supreme American decade. How supreme? No other nation has exercised such military, economic, diplomatic and cultural reach since Rome. And Rome's world was little more than the Mediterranean.

The American triumph in the '90s came as a rude surprise to some. Only a decade ago, Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* ushered in the conventional wisdom that America, suffering from "imperial overstretch," was in decline. With the collapse of the Soviet Empire, it was assumed that the world would go from cold war bipolarity to multipolarity. After all, was not Japan flourishing, Europe unifying, China rising?

Remember that late-'80s joke: The U.S. and Russia waged a cold war for half a century. Who won? Japan.

Well, it did not turn out quite that way. Japan went into economic decline. The U.S.S.R., then Russia, collapsed. Europe entered a decade of economic stagnation and diplomatic fecklessness (as displayed in the Balkans until the U.S. cavalry arrived). And China, though rising, remains decades away from being able to pose a global challenge to the U.S.

As everyone now recognizes, the world at the turn of the 21st century is not multipolar but unipolar. America bestrides the world like a colossus. Such hegemony is rare in history because coalitions of rival powers invariably rise to challenge and cut down the big guy. Two centuries ago, Russia, Prussia, Britain and Austria rallied together to defeat Napoleonic France's bid for European hegemony. The miracle of the '90s has been the dog that didn't bark: Where is the opposition, where are the coalitions of second-rank states rising to challenge Pax Americana?

The main reason for the absence of a serious challenge to American hegemony is that it is so benign. It does not extract tribute. It does not seek military occupation. It is not interested in acquiring territory—indeed, it specializes in giving it up, as shown in the Philippines and Panama. Economically, the world has prospered under the open trading system the U.S. supports.

And culturally, America is a hit. Arnold is a universal icon. Latvians like their Levi's. And everyone loves McDonald's.

Well, not everyone, and there's the rub. Americans, happy in their getting and spending, are largely oblivious to their massive world influence. But others are not, particularly foreign élites. Some chafe, like the French Minister of Culture who called Disneyland Paris a cultural Chernobyl. Some rant, like the Malaysian Prime Minister who rose at the U.N. in September to denounce "the true ugliness of Western capitalism ... backed by the military might of capitalism's greatest proponent."

And some are quietly assembling the building blocks of the coming world opposition. Two events in the closing weeks of the 20th century give a hint of the new world to come in the 21st. On Dec. 9, Boris Yeltsin and Jiang Zemin bear-hugged in Beijing, then issued a communiqué noting "negative" world trends including "the forcing of the international community to accept a unipolar world pattern and a single model of culture, value concepts and ideology."

The very next day, the European Union announced the establishment of a "rapid reaction force" of 60,000 to be controlled by Europe alone. Just a complement to NATO, they said. But no one believes that. It is the seed of a European army—independent of the U.S.

True, there is no guarantee that any Sino-Russian alliance will last. Nor that Europe will have the political will to boost defense spending and sustain a true rival to the American military. And, of course, none have the power to challenge America now. The unipolar moment will surely last for at least a generation. But the opening chapter in the history of the 21st century has just been written. The world is stirring.

America cannot defy all the laws of history at once. We have somehow managed to defy the laws of economics, enjoying low employment, low inflation and rapid growth all at the same time. We have reversed the trajectory of social decay, with unexplained and unpredicted declines in such indexes of social pathology as crime, dependency and even teen pregnancy.

But the laws of international politics cannot be defied forever. Not since Rome destroyed Carthage has a great power risen to the heights we have. And not since then has any country bidding for hegemony been able to avoid creating, simply by dint of its own power, a serious and concerted coalition of opposition.

History has not ended; it only looks that way. The great struggle of the 21st century—to dethrone America—has already begun. ■



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